

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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MABEL'S PROGRESS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE."

BOOK V.

CHAPTER III. A ROMEO INCOGNITO.

CLEMENT, meanwhile, profoundly unconscious of the emotions of anger and curiosity he had excited in Mrs. Hutchins's breast, was strolling along the hot, dusty streets with some leisure on his hands which he did not well know how to dispose of. He had been to his office, and had found that the expected letters that he was to have answered had not been received. They could not now arrive until the following evening. He would have returned to Walter's lodgings, but his knowledge of his brother's habits forbade him to expect to find him at home so soon. He had turned westward, and was wandering on in a purposeless way, when his progress was arrested by a crowd assembled beneath a portico blazing with lights, and in front of which cabs and carriages kept drawing up in quick succession, and with a mighty clatter.

Looking at the building, towards which a steady tide of people was moving, his eye was caught by the words "Romeo and Juliet" in conspicuous letters. With a blind impulse, scarcely conscious of what he did, he entered the pit door with the stream, and in a few seconds had paid his money, and was pressing onward for a seat like the others.

The performances had commenced with a short, trifling piece, and the green curtain had just fallen, preparatory to rising on the tragedy. The band was playing a lively waltz, with much sharp clashing of cymbals, and metallic braying of wind instruments. The music was strangely out of tune with Clement's mood, and yet it strung his nerves to a pitch of high excitement. His heart beat quickly, and his foot mechanically kept time to the rhythm of the dance tune. He had found a place close against the dress-boxes at one side of the theatre, and had pressed the soft felt hat he wore down over his eyes, with a dread of being recognised, which his reason told him was groundless and absurd. Two young men of the smart clerk species were seated immediately before him, and kept up a running fire of talk. The performance they had come to witness appeared to be the last thing in their thoughts. Clement listened vacantly

to their babble, in which one "Jim" played a conspicuous though unintelligible part. As the music drew to a close, winding up with a final crash like twenty tinsmiths' shops in full work, a white-haired man near him, seeing him without a playbill, offered his own, and began to speak.

"Seen the noo Juliet, sir?" asked the white-haired man.

"No."

"Not seen her? Ah! more have I. But I'll tell you what; I've seen Miss O'Neil, sir, and I don't think we shall look upon *her* like again in a hurry."

Clement having nothing to say, said nothing.

"Much of a play-goer, sir?"

"No."

"Not much of a play-goer? Ah! more am I, now. But I'll tell you what, sir; I used to be, in the *parmy* days—the good old times—the days of yore, sir, as I call 'em, when acting was acting. Days of yore indeed, sir; too truly yore, as I say."

The white-haired man continued to repeat the word "yore" with an unction apparently derived from his own very hazy comprehension of its meaning. Clement, feeling strongly averse to being drawn into a discussion on the present state of the British drama, was relieved when a little tinkling bell sounded, and the great curtain rose slowly with a rustling, creaking sound.

The first scenes of the play passed quietly. Mr. Alarie Allen, as Mercutio, was received with a burst of applause, and his brilliant, picturesque costume, and spirited, easy manner, were much approved of by the white-haired man, who yet made comparisons, not wholly to the advantage of the modern actor, between him and some forgotten celebrity of the "days of yore."

"As the time for Juliet's entrance drew near, a little thrill of excitement ran round the house. Even the two smart clerks ceased their whispered conversation about "Jim," and addressed their smug faces to the stage. The critical play-goer folded his arms, and settled himself in his seat with the air of one whose weighty duty it now was to give judgment on the new performer. As to Clement, when the nurse called "Juliet!" he was seized with a sensation of terror, strong enough to have induced him to rise up and run away had

such a proceeding been in any way possible. But a moment more—a hush of expectancy—and the theatre rang with loud, reiterated plaudits, and his eyes were fixed spell-bound upon the stage. No running away now. He could not have stirred to save his life.

A slight, girlish creature, lithesome and graceful of form, with a shining, pearly, satin robe falling around her in rich folds, whereon there was a delicious, ever-varying play of light and shade. A round, well-poised head, whose pure outline was well displayed by the simple arrangement of her dark hair. A face, not perfectly regular in feature, but so instinct with genius, lighted so manifestly by a bright soul within, as to impress all those who looked upon it with a sense of the highest beauty. The brow was candid and smooth; the eyes innocently vivacious as a child's. Only in the delicate mouth there was a suggestion of sadness; a little drooping curve that told of capacity for suffering, and hinted all the pathos and the passion which that bright countenance had power to express. This was Juliet—Juliet as she might have been seen in the flesh centuries ago in old Verona, and who now stood bowing with a sober, modest grace in acknowledgment of the loud greeting of a crowd of nineteenth-century Englishmen. Then there was silence, and she spoke.

There are voices that speak to the ear, and flatter the sense with sweetness, yet move one no more than the melodious tinkle of a musical-box. Other voices vibrate subtly through the hearer's heart, and steal upon his inmost sympathies. Such a voice was Juliet's, pure, fresh, thrilling; with, at times, a little natural tremor in its tone like the shimmering of the air on a sultry summer's day. Upon one hearer's heart, at least, that voice fell like sweet music, and thrilled it to the core. Was it pain or ecstasy to see her once again? To see her thus, beautiful, brilliant, wielding the sceptre of genius in her girlish hand, compelling all around to own its power for the moment, even though the spell were but of brief duration—and as far removed from him, as the silver moon that was shining then above the flaring gas-lights of the theatre! He sat like one in a dream throughout the whole play. The white-haired man vainly tried to elicit his opinion of the new actress. The young clerks' prating fell unheeded on his ear. Once only was he aroused from his trance. It was when at the termination of the second act, the door of a private box was thrown noisily open, and the sound attracting his attention, he involuntarily looked up and beheld the entrance of the new comers. The next instant he started back and shrank down into the shade. In the front of the box sat Lady Popham, be-wigged, bejewelled, bedizened after her manner, with the great gold eye-glass in full force. Near to her, with his back to the stage, sat Arthur Skidley, negligently scanning the house through an opera-glass. And behind her ladyship's chair, his pale handsome face and black hair relieved against the dark red lining of the box, lounged Alfred Trescott. His mood seemed to be unusually subdued and silent, and

he bent down now and then to listen, or reply to the restless old lady's remarks, with a kind of languid deference that did not ill become him.

Clement's pulse beat quicker on the next occasion of Juliet's coming on to the stage. "Will she betray any consciousness of his presence?" was the first thought that flashed through his mind; and then he contemned himself bitterly for a fool. The question was soon answered. Juliet was Juliet still. All her faculties were absorbed in the portrayal of the varying, swiftly changing passions of love, joy, grief, terror, despair. With every scene the enthusiasm of the audience rose; until, at the final fall of the curtain, the cheers were overwhelming. The heroine of the night was led forward to bow her thanks, and to receive sundry bouquets tossed in quick succession on to the stage. These she took simply; without either exaggerated demonstrations of gratitude, or offensive indifference. Absence of affectation, indeed, marked all she did. As she left the stage, the actor who had been playing Romeo perceived one flower lying neglected—a crimson camellia of great beauty—and seemed about to return for it, but she held back his hand, and with a last low curtsey, disappeared. Clement rose to go with a dizzy throbbing head, and eyes dimmed with tears, that the pathetic close of the marvellous love-story had drawn from him. A stream of people poured out of the theatre pell-mell. The white-haired man (who had been blubbering unrestrainedly behind a yellow pocket-handkerchief) now asserted himself by much severe criticism and allusions to the "days of yore." The young clerks had returned to their one absorbing topic. The last words Clement heard them utter, were expressive of a conviction that "Jim" knew what he was about. That others might be wrong, or might be right, but that "Jim" was safe "to run on the right side of the post, to know when he was well off, and to recognise on which side of his bread the butter lay." Shakespeare's tragedy of Romeo and Juliet had apparently caused but slight and temporary interruption to the thread of this interesting discussion. As Clement reached the doorway and felt the cool pure air (cool and pure by contrast) upon his forehead, a stately equipage drew up beneath the portico. Into it, escorted by her great-nephew, skipped Lady Popham. On the pavement stood Alfred Trescott, bowing "good night." The overcoat that he wore was thrown back, and in the instant that he looked upon him, it flashed on Clement that he missed a flower from Trescott's breast, and that the neglected crimson blossom lying on the stage had been thrown by his hand.

It was long past eleven o'clock when Penelope Charlewood, sitting alone in the comfortless little parlour with her work in her hand, heard the key turn in the door, and went into the passage to receive her brother. They spoke in whispers, for Mrs. Charlewood had gone to rest, and every sound penetrated through the slight building.

"Penny, I'm so sorry you sat up, my dear."

"I had to sit up, Clem, to finish stitching

these collars. This is the last of the set. You're late. Very busy at the office?"

"No; not very. I went to Watty's. He was not at home, but I left a note to say he must come and see mother to-morrow."

"Oh," said Penelope, dryly. Then she looked wistfully at her brother. He had drawn back the blind, and was standing by the window looking on to the waste ground mysteriously transformed beneath the moonlight. "You are awfully fagged, Clem, and so pale! Or is it the moonlight on your face? No; you do look shockingly harassed. I'm sure you are worrying yourself about those anonymous letters. Shake it off, Clem. Why don't you good people have faith in the power of goodness?"

"No, Penny; no, indeed, my dear girl, it is not that. It is,—I—do feel a little fagged. But I don't need or deserve so much sympathy. Good night, dear; you must be tired. I will go to bed at once."

"Ah!" said Penelope to herself, lying wakefully in her bed, "he can't deceive me. I know Clem so well. Every tone of his voice, every trick of his face; and I am *sure* he has been bothering himself about Watty and those letters!"

No. The locked silent chambers of her brother's brain kept their secret even from her keen scrutiny. Walter might never have been born, and the anonymous letters never written, for all the part they were playing in Clement's thoughts. What were the visions that flitted through the hot head he laid upon his pillow?

A shining satin dress; a pale, passionate face leaning down from a high quaint balcony; a white-robed figure huddled hopelessly upon the ground, with its dark hair streaming over the breast of a dead lover. And then a solitary crimson flower lying unheeded on the stage, and the sweeping flow of long trailing garments as their wearer bowed "farewell!"

CHAPTER IV. AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

MABEL EARNSHAW lived with her mother and Dooley in a pleasant house in one of the most sequestered of the Highgate lanes. Her great and assured success, surpassing even the expectations of those who most highly estimated her talent—for, as Mr. Alaric Allen said, "there's a certain element of chance in these things always, and if you miss fire at the first attempt, the public seldom has leisure to allow you a second trial-shot"—had enabled her to take this pretty residence, to surround her mother with many long disused luxuries, and to enjoy the happiness of seeing her little brother frolicking on a green lawn, instead of being mewed up in the small close rooms of their Dublin lodgings. Dooley was in high delight. He had parted from kind Aunt Mary and her family with regret, and had particularly missed Jack, with whom he had formed a close friendship, and whose versatile talents had impressed him deeply. But to be with mamma and Tibby was in itself a balm for any sorrows Dooley had yet known; and when, after a few weeks' sojourn at a London hotel, he was taken to the Highgate cottage embowered in trees,

and shut in from the noisy world by thick fragrant green hedges, his joy and excitement knew no bounds. Mabel's face grew bright as she watched the little fellow's eager interest in all around him, and the investigations throughout the house and grounds which his spirit of inquiry led him to make. There was a small white-curtained, fresh, cozy nest of a room, with ivy leaves tapping at its casement, that was reserved for "Master Julian." And there was a ruddy-faced country girl standing at the door of it to welcome him, who ran and caught him in her arms and hugged him, and laughed and cried altogether, and who proved to be the faithful Betty, secretly sent for from Hazlehurst to surprise him. And in the kitchen there was—yes, there was indeed—a kitten; smooth and beautiful of fur, and bright of eye, and with a collar round its neck, to which a little bell was fastened that jingled cheerfully. "She are a very nice pussy-kitten," said Dooley, stroking her with a thoughtful face. "A booful pussy-kitten; but I *tan't* love her quite so much as my own old pussy-kitten, tan I, Tibby? Because my own old pussy-kitten was *so* sorry when I did go away. And dis little pussy-kitten has never been sorry. And I must love de sorry one best, mustn't I, Tibby?"

Mrs. Saxelby nestled down into the pleasant home provided for her with child-like satisfaction. Her natural taste, and love of refinement and beauty in all her surroundings, were gratified to the utmost. And then her mother's heart exulted with the proud thought, "This is my Mabel's doing! All these good things represent her energy, industry, and genius, and the public recognition of those qualities." For all trace of horror and disapproval of the means by which Mabel was earning fame and fortune had vanished from Mrs. Saxelby's mind long ago. Not precisely on conviction—although an intimate knowledge of Mary Walton's life and home might have sufficed to modify on strictly logical grounds the sweeping condemnation that Mr. Saxelby and the Flukes were wont to utter against stage-players—but simply because Mrs. Saxelby had now been living for some time under the influence of people in whose eyes the actor's calling was an honourable one. In the first days of Mabel's experience as a London actress, Mrs. Saxelby had accompanied her daughter to the theatre each evening, and had sat in her dressing-room, or had occasionally ventured into the green-room for ten minutes at a time, never remaining there an instant after Mabel had quitted it for the stage. But for a day or two preceding Clement Charlewood's unpremeditated visit to the Thespian Theatre, Mrs. Saxelby had been suffering from a slight cold and sore-throat, which made it desirable for her to avoid exposure to the night air. Therefore Mabel had driven to the theatre for several evenings with no other escort than the faithful Betty, who came provided with a large worsted stocking to knit. Betty had never sufficiently got over her awe and admiration of the glittering stage garments to venture upon handling them. As to acting the part of

lady's-maid to her young mistress, that was entirely out of the question. But there was, luckily, no need of her services in that respect, for a dresser, belonging to the theatre, a woman experienced in her business, was in attendance each night in "Miss Bell's" room. On the evening succeeding that spoken of in my last chapter, Mabel and her somewhat uncouth-looking Abigail, the rustic ruddiness of whose cheeks defied even the glare of the gas-lights, arrived at the stage door of the Royal Thespian Theatre at their usual hour.

The interior of a theatre by daylight is always taken to be a strange anomalous scene; but I doubt whether the same scene, just before the hour of opening the doors to the public in the evening, be not in its way as singular to an unaccustomed eye, and equally far from revealing any promise of the bright pictures to be presently exhibited to the many-headed now waiting outside in the summer evening sunshine.

There is a bustle and a constant succession of arrivals at the stage door, it is true. That dingy portal swings to and fro ceaselessly; the well-worn cords running swiftly over the pulley as the great leaden weights fall and cause the door to slam to with a creaking jar. Servants, supers, carpenters, dressers, scene-shifters, crowd in with a careless nod or hasty "good evening" to the doorkeeper, who sits in his own small pen hung round with playbills, and takes note of each one as he or she enters. By-and-by the performers begin to arrive, and occasionally a letter or newspaper is reached down from the little pigeon-holes in the hall, each with a letter of the alphabet painted over it. The narrow wooden staircase leading up to the stage is feebly lighted by a single gas-burner. The various employés of the theatre troop up it one after the other, dispersing at the top each to his separate department—scene-room, dressing-room, property-room, or wardrobe. But on the great stage itself all is silence. The scene is not yet quite set, and the depth of the spacious stage is revealed even to the back wall of the building. There are great chasms and caverns of shadow, for the theatre is not entirely lighted up, nor the gas turned on to its full power. The front of the house is vast and ghostly, with a ray of light shining in here and there from the lobbies through the half-open box doors. The dingy holland covers that shield the gilding and velvet from dust, still drape the wide semicircle like a pall, and glimmer spectrally through the gloom. The orchestra is a black gulf, like a giant grave newly dug, and yawning just in front of the crimson stalls. Up above in the lofty roof the great chandelier looms vaguely with an undefined outline. It might be floating self-poised over the wide space beneath, for aught that can be discerned of its supports. By-and-by it will sparkle and flash like an enormous diamond, and the boxes will shine in scarlet and gold and white. The black orchestra will be full of light and sound, and careless fiddlers will laugh and chat, and glance nonchalantly about them as they tune their instruments. There will be

no shadow, no vagueness, no mystery. Only the great canvas act-drop will shut out the audience from the actors, and divide two realms differing as widely from each other as any kingdoms that were ever sundered by a political boundary line!

Mabel arriving at the theatre with her country servant on this especial evening of which I write, and going into her dressing-room, found it lighted up, and the toilet-table set forth, but the woman who usually attended on her was not there. She began to dress, however, with Betty's assistance (rendered very tremblingly, and with an overpowering sense of her own unfitness for the task), and it was not long before a tap at the door announced the arrival of the dresser. "Come in, Davis," said Mabel. But it was not Davis who entered. The person who came into the room bearing a large shallow open basket containing Juliet's satin train, was a tall woman in a bright print gown, the body and skirt of which had parted company in sundry places. She had an elaborate gilt comb in her tow-coloured hair, and was extremely smart, but not extremely clean.

"Is Davis not here to-night?" asked Mabel, seeing the unexpected figure in the looking-glass, without turning her head.

"No, miss; she is not, miss. Davis is bad with influenzy, and the housekeeper has sent me as her substitoot. I dresses the ladies in number three, miss, but there's nobody in my room to-night, so—"

Whilst the woman was speaking, Mabel turned to look at her, struck by something familiar in the sound of her voice.

"Surely I know you, do I not?" she said.

"Oh yes, miss. Most *unconvertibly* you know me, sure enough! Hammerham, miss."

"To be sure!" cried Mabel, into whose cheeks a tide of recollections caused a bright colour to mount and then to fade as quickly. "I remember you now quite well. You are Mrs. Hutchins. But how strange to find you here!" she added, wonderingly. For Miss Fluke had not failed to sing loud psalms over Mrs. Hutchins's conversion from novel reading, and such like iniquities, and to hold her up as a bright example of the admirable results of her own eloquence. Indeed, Mrs. Hutchins had been at one time a kind of recruiting sergeant under that spiritual Amazon; and had harried her neighbours and friends in the good cause with much zeal. During the progress of Mabel's toilet, Mrs. Hutchins proceeded to give a voluminous account of the causes that had led to her leaving Hammerham. In the financial crash which had ruined great houses, little ones had suffered also. Mr. Hutchins was suddenly thrown out of work by the failure of his employer, and was glad to be taken on temporarily by the head carpenter of the Hammerham theatre. Thence—being a sober steady man who knew his business—he got to London; his friend, the theatrical head carpenter, having procured him a situation. "Hutchins was at a east-end house at first, miss," said Mrs. Hutchins, winding up her recital. "But we've

been at the Thespian now goin' on for three months. I had long been wishful of getting some oecckyption for myself. And hearing of a dresser being wanted here, I applied, and the housekeeper she conferred the vacation upon me immediate."

It was odd to see how Mrs. Hutchins's old passion for the high-flown and romantic had survived the Flukian era, and was still strong and vigorous. Only her affections had been transferred from Rosalba of Naples and that interesting sisterhood to the heroines of the drama. Mrs. Hutchins generally had in her pocket a small paper-covered book—one of the gems of Cumberland's acting edition, or Mr. Lacy's more modern dramas. And these she devoured in the old manner that belonged to her; a manner that may, perhaps, be characterised as the slatternly-sentimental. Betty, knitting away at her stocking, regarded Mrs. Hutchins from time to time with a stare of stolid surprise. I have done but scant justice to that good lady's narrative. As given by herself it was embellished with many rhetorical flourishes and elegant flowers of quotation. After Mabel had left the room, Mrs. Hutchins still lingered; trifling with the toilet articles, arranging the dressing-case that needed no arrangement, and so forth. Betty watched her shy and glum behind her stocking.

"Been with Miss Bell long?" asked Mrs. Hutchins, with airy condescension.

"Ah; a goodish bit."

"Nice young person, ain't she?"

"What?"

"A—a—pleasant young—lady, I say; ain't she?"

"Yes, she is."

Betty's manner was unpromising; almost threatening. Mrs. Hutchins changed her tactics.

"You are not a Londoner, are you?"

"No; I ben't."

"Indeed! Well, no more ain't I. I come from Hammerham, myself. Ah, deary me! To look upon what I have seen, when I sees what I do see! Miss Bell and me was acquainted in old days."

"Was you?"

"Oh laws yes! And me and others was acquainted too. Only yesterday I seen a old friend of Miss Bell's. She didn't go by the name of Bell when I first knew her. But you know what's in a name, don't you?"

"No; what?" demanded the literal Betty.

"Oh, nothing. *He's* a instance of the ups and downs of life. I've known the time when him or any of his family might have ate bank-notes betwixt bread-and-butter. And now a two-pair back is his sphere of action. Well, there's no making silk purses out of sow's ears. The Charlewoods was sprung up out of the kennel. There's a deal in blood, I think."

Betty's face had relaxed from its rigidity. There was a sparkle of curiosity in her eye. But with rustic cunning that was wary of Mrs. Hutchins's town-bred cuteness, she asked no point-blank question. "I heerd as they'd

come to London," she said, clicking her knitting-needles.

"Oh, you know the family, then?"

"By hearsay. I was born and bred nigh to Hammerham, and everybody knowed the Charlewoods there. Gandy and Charlewood they were called. I used to think, when I was little, as it was all one name."

Then Mrs. Hutchins leant her folded arms on the dressing-table, and poured forth a flood of gossip. She related all she had heard from the lodging-house servant, and coloured the tale with a warmth and boldness that ought to have made her fortune in halfpenny numbers. Poor Clement! Had there been any truth in the saying, how his ears must have tingled! Mrs. Hutchins did not spare him. Her rancour seemed strangely disproportional to his offence. But mean minds are apt to expend more spite on slights than on injuries. There is some dignity in being injured; but a trifling offence, of which the offender is unconscious, envenoms petty malignity. Betty listened stolidly. She was surprised and puzzled, but at the base of her cogitations, was a rooted distrust of the glib Mrs. Hutchins; the kind of instinctive suspicion that a dog or a child might feel.

The meeting with the Hammerham landlady was not the only surprise destined for Mabel that evening.

Mr. Alaric Allen prided himself on the strictness with which he enforced the prohibition against admitting strangers behind the scenes of his theatre. But there were nevertheless a few exceptions made in favour of literary men, dramatic authors, critics, and so forth. Occasionally, too, at rare intervals, an idle good-humoured fine gentleman gained admission. Such persons would subject themselves to unheard of snubbings and humiliations, and to yet more intolerable patronage in order to gain the privilege of passing an hour behind the scenes of the Thespian Theatre. It is to be feared that the end when gained was scarcely satisfactory. An idle man in a crowd of workers is never at his ease. And it was a spectacle to awaken pity in the freezing breast, to behold a courteous, amiable person, a peer of the realm it might be, or "curled darling" of drawing-rooms, with a vacant uneasy smile on his face, pushed about by surly scowling scene-shifters, sternly hushed down by the prompter, driven hither and thither, getting into difficulties with "set pieces," tripping over black coils of gas-pipe, scraping his glossy evening coat against whitewashed walls, and finding everybody (from the call-boy upwards) too much occupied to spare any attention for his civil little speeches! Now and then there might come a lull between the acts, when the principal performers sat and chatted in the green-room. Then the visitor, perhaps, would have a chance of exchanging half a dozen words with Lady Teazle or Rosalind; or of complimenting Coriolanus on his "admirable performance." The great tragedian meanwhile answering very civilly, and very much at random, with his eyes

fixed on the large psyche mirror, rearranging the classic folds of his toga, and mentally debating whether his wig had the right Roman severity of outline. Perhaps the true gust and enjoyment of the thing came afterwards, when the fortunate visitor would carelessly allude to "the other evening when I was behind the scenes at the Thespian, you know. Ever been behind the scenes? Not easy to get in there, but it's awfully good fun."

Mabel, entering the green-room with the unexpected encounter with Mrs. Hutchins fresh in her mind, was accosted by a gentleman whom she already knew slightly; a well-known musical critic. Behind him stood a young man in full evening costume, who made Mabel a profound bow. There was another man in the room who stood leaning on the mantelpiece, with his face turned away.

"Allow me to present my friend, Captain Skidley," said the musical critic—a fussy, pompous personage—introducing the young man who had bowed. Then, turning and touching the other man on the shoulder, he went on: "I think you two have met before. Miss Bell, Mr. Alfred Trescott."

SOLDIERS' WEDDINGS.

I AM the curate of a large parish. Round my pretty church the country sweeps away until it is bounded by a range of many-coloured hills. The church itself is embosomed in a grove of beech-trees. On either side of the porch are ranged some fragments of a more ancient building: an Anglo-Saxon font of huge dimensions, a portion of a broken cross, the remains of a sculptured tomb retaining only an earnest adjuration that passing strangers should pray for the dead who once lay beneath. Under weeping larches is a cluster of costly monuments "erected by brother-officers to their departed comrades." How young they have all died! Some, survived the toils and dangers of the Indian mutiny to fade away at home. Others, were cut off suddenly in the pride of youth and strength. There is a camp within the boundaries of our parish, and they escort their dead officers with military pomp and circumstance to this quiet graveyard. Too often have we seen the long procession moving slowly down the hills—the gun-carriage and its burden; the charger which seems conscious of its master's death; the firing-party who, when all the rest is over, startle the air to the sound of the *réveillé*, so like the wail of a spirit struggling to depart. What a world of idle hopes lies buried here! Regiment after regiment come and disappear. They leave the dead and their memorials behind them to our care. Sometimes, after the lapse of many years, a soldier comes to view the resting-place of "the officer of his company." He has seen much service since he followed his commander to the grave. He tells me the story of his life, and much about the captain who sleeps below. I observe he is pleased

that the moss which will grow round the base of tombs is trimmed and neatly kept in order, and that the rose or box tree, which he and his colour-sergeant planted at the foot, have grown so well. Seated among these tombs, you would imagine you were far away from any haunt of men, all is so still and silent. Yet the roar of the cannon and the rattling volleys of musketry awake you from your reverie, and tell you that behind the hills an army is manoeuvring in mimic warfare.

But it is not of soldiers' graves, but of soldiers' marriages that I wish to speak. We celebrate many such marriages in our village church. It is strange how private soldiers contrive to gain pretty winsome girls. The brides are not from our neighbourhood or county. They have followed their lovers from Manchester, Leeds, Bristol, and other towns where the regiment has been quartered. They lodge for a fortnight or three weeks within the boundaries of the parish, and then "put up the banns." Marriage by banns is comparatively inexpensive—it costs ten shillings at the utmost. Yet sometimes "the parties" find it hard to make up this sum. The girl will gladly take service for a month or two, and save every penny of her wages for the fee, "to get her soldier," as a blushing creature, not seventeen years of age, told the rector's wife last week. Not seldom an angry father or anxious brother comes to "forbid the banns." I am powerless to accept their prohibition unless the girl is under age. I must "put up the banns," and celebrate the marriage, under heavy penalties, if the parties are of full years, and no legal impediment be proved. Should the girl be under age, she can yet baffle father, mother, and all her kith and kin, by a very simple method. She has but to appear before the registrar with a friend, and state her age, residence, &c. The registrar transmits the list of candidates for matrimony to the Poor Law Guardians. These are landed gentlemen who seldom know anything of the parties, and who cannot be expected to attend carefully, while their clerk reads out a list of from fifty to a hundred names, all of the lower order. Then after an interval of a week the registrar performs the prayerless ceremony in five minutes, and if there should be perjury in the case, who is to prosecute, or what is the utility of a prosecution? The girl has left her home, and her parents try to make the best of it.

Sometimes the bride and bridegroom are anything but interesting. I once married a coarse woman, who wore a man's trousers under her apology for a gown, and a tremendous pair of "ammunition boots." Soldiers, especially old soldiers, sometimes choose a wife, not for show, but use. A good stout washerwoman, who is well able to do a turn of hard work and hold her own, a widow with a few pounds or the furniture of a room, such charmers seem to possess strong claims upon the veteran's heart.

Occasionally we have a scene of romance. Not long ago, a showy damsel, adorned with chains and trinkets, and rustling in silks and crinoline, offered my wife fifty pounds if she

would get her married before morning. That, of course, was impossible, unless the officiating clergyman desired to be transported. I traced out a portion of this young lady's history, and found that the intended bridegroom was suffering under temporary insanity. Within a few hours he was under the guardianship of his friends. When a regiment is ordered out to India, we have a rush of marriages; on one Sunday, last year, the list of banns occupied several minutes in reading. In India, the wives permitted to go with the regiment are valuable auxiliaries to the husband. They are cared for by the officer's ladies; they are well paid as laundresses, cooks, or attendants. They earn more money than the soldiers, and, if thrifty and well conducted, may be really comfortable. For three weeks or a fortnight before the departure of the regiment, the parish clerk is busy preparing notices for banns or licenses. The cost of a common soldier's license is now reduced to five shillings and sixpence; but this fee goes to the registrar of the diocese, not to the clergyman. The church fees are an additional charge. The marriage by banns is consequently cheaper by five shillings and sixpence to the common soldier, and by sixteen shillings and sixpence to the corporal and higher officers. There is a search made for a Saint's day in the calendar as the time of departure approaches. If there be a church festival in the week, the parties can be "called" and married within nine days. Experience proves that the marriage law should be relaxed in the case of soldiers ordered on foreign service, who have obtained "leave" to marry. It is a question whether a commanding officer can legally marry on shipboard when there is no chaplain in the vessel. Colonels and majors, however, have thus performed the wedding ceremony on emergency. If commanding officers have this privilege, why should not clergymen also possess it, and be allowed to marry in such cases on three days' notice? Some very distressing and painful incidents prove that a modification of the marriage law is desirable in this respect. No Protestant clergyman can celebrate a marriage after twelve o'clock in the day; the Roman Catholic priest can marry when and where he pleases. It has frequently happened that on the very day appointed for the wedding, a review, or grand parade, or extraordinary guard is ordered. When this is the case, the soldier cannot reach the church in time. The whole party is disappointed, and the marriage deferred. I have waited at the church on five several days for a bridegroom who was detained "on duty," and the misery of the intended bride was inconceivable. What magic is there in the hour of twelve o'clock? Should not a marriage celebrated at the hour of one, two, or three, in the afternoon be as legitimate as one celebrated before twelve? I fear my clerk's watch is sometimes not quite up to time—no one thinks of looking at the dial in the church tower—and I fancy that many a marriage would have been celebrated *not* within canonical hours, if our parish watches were always regulated by the time-ball at Greenwich.

A sergeant's, especially a colour-sergeant's, wedding, is often a grand affair. I married a beautiful young girl, recently, to a fine stalwart fellow, who had seen much service, and who has a claim upon the Kirwee prize money, should it be fully distributed during his life. The bride was dressed for the occasion by the officers' ladies of her father's regiment. He was a bronzed old soldier, and had his left breast covered with medals. The bride was attended to the altar by six bridesmaids, attired alike. This wedding was remarkable in a parish celebrated for its marriages. There are not many like it. Often only the pair who are to walk together through life, appear before the chancel rails, and the sexton and clerk must be the attesting witnesses. I have frequently regretted my inability to dissuade girls from marrying soldiers "without leave," but they will persist in entertaining a confident hope that they will be taken "on the strength" very soon. The wives, in these cases, are not recognised by the officers' ladies or by the regiment. They must rent a room or share a lodging with four or five others, who may be reputable characters or the reverse. The husband can visit his wife only by "starts," and she is wholly unprotected at night. What can a private save, even from his increased pay, to enable him to support a wife without some assistance from the state? As long as her little savings last, her position is tolerable; when those are exhausted, she tries—steadily and laboriously tries—to earn something by needle-work, by weeding or binding in the fields, or by selling fruit and vegetables. But it is a hard life at best, and exposed to wrong and sore temptation. How often has my interference been entreated by some young weeping wife whose husband has committed a trifling breach of military discipline, and is removed far from her for many days! But when the regiment to which her husband belongs, has got the route, then comes the real misery. She is not on the strength. She must be left behind, perhaps with a baby at her breast, and another at her knees. It is almost as bad as death, a separation now; but she will be with him to the last upon his way. You may see them, women of all ages, tramping by the flanks of the marching regiment. One hand of the soldier is in his wife's, the other holds his musket; the sergeant, kindly, never minds, and martinetis are for once short-sighted. The band plays cheerily "The girl we left behind us," until the ship receives its living freight, and the women wretchedly pace the pier—a mournful company. Still there is a struggle: they work, and work incessantly. They live on next to nothing. They scraze and save, in a manner all but incredible. Many of them in some way—I never can ascertain how—find means to join their husbands abroad. I have known them to make their way to Gibraltar, Malta, India, apparently without means. A few of those who are left, return to their parents or their friends. They may be received, for their manual services are valuable; at the worst, there is the poor-house. But some hover about the pre-

circuits of the camp, and gradually sink step by step.

Nor, until the circular of Lord Longford was issued last week, could the condition even of the women "married with leave" be deemed desirable. They were "on the strength" to be sure. The ladies of the regiment looked after them: there were schools for their children, medical assistance, and opportunities for adding, to the husbands' scanty means, by such labour as willing hands and anxious hearts can execute. Yet how were they housed? From four to six men with their wives and children stowed away in a narrow hut, without means for privacy or even for decency. A little curtain, when it could be obtained, nominally screened off bed from bed. Efforts were made to alleviate the shames and discomforts of the married soldiers' life, but in vain. The want of a separate room for each family frustrated the most zealous Christian interference.

But the Horse Guards' circular makes marriage a prize for service and good conduct. Seven men out of every hundred, rank and file, can now obtain permission to marry, provided they have each served in the army for seven years, and obtained, at least, one good-conduct badge. Seven in every hundred is about the proportion of those who at present marry, with and without leave, together. The wife will have, if possible, a separate room in camp or barracks; she will receive light, fuel, and rations at the cost of the state; but what may be more important than all, she will be under the eye of the ladies of the garrison. By this arrangement wives will be a help rather than an encumbrance to their husbands. Marriage becomes a reward, not a military crime, and marriage "without leave," and all its attendant miseries, will be to a great extent prevented. More than one-half of the sergeants in a regiment may at once marry with leave, and become entitled to these privileges.

Many improvements have been effected in the soldier's condition within the last few years, but none likely to be attended with more beneficial effects upon the morals of the troops than this. The addition of twopence and threepence per day to the soldier's wage virtually doubles all he had before to spend or save. His barracks are constructed now, on approved sanitary principles; his clothing, food, and opportunities for education are excellent. He has his recreation-rooms, reading-rooms, and regimental gardens. The troop-ships, constructed specially to convey him to our colonies and dependencies, are magnificent models of naval architecture; and henceforth, in the hour of trial, his arm will not be unnerved by the bitter thought that his wife and children are waifs and strays tossed about upon the cold waters of the world's charity.

A trained soldier is an expensive article. He costs the state, before he is fitted to face an enemy, from one hundred to one hundred and forty pounds. It is economy to consider his health and comfort. Soldiers cannot be manufactured in a day, and our small army must make up in vigour and spirit for its deficiency in numbers. Statesmen have at last discovered that a soldier is a man, and not a machine. He

is permitted at last, "if well conducted," to assist the husbandmen in gathering in the harvest, and to breathe the pure country air, while adding to his little store by manly and pleasant labour. He will not be the less valiant in the field because he is treated as a human being.

THREE GOOD DOGS.

EVERY dog has his day; some dogs have two days: one, the short span of canine life, the other, the more enduring existence of fame. M. Emile Richebourg has just collected a number of the latter into an amusing volume, entitled *Histoire des Chiens Célèbres*. Some publisher, doubtless, will soon give this, entire, to the public in an English dress; meanwhile, we introduce our readers to three only of his celebrated dogs.

Bandjarra is the name of a race of people who, although few in number, are met with all over India. Dealing in corn, they travel much from place to place. Their resources are very limited, and their temporary dwellings of the simplest construction. On a plot of ground a few feet square, in the midst of a forest, and generally on an eminence, the Bandjarra settler fixes his residence during a portion of the year. Sacks full of wheat, covered with skins, constitute the walls of his mansion; other skins, suspended from branches, form a roof which imperfectly keeps out wind and rain. Beneath this tent are herded the oxen, which are the Bandjarra's principal wealth. His dog keeps ceaseless watch outside. The Bandjarra dog is not remarkable for any external grace or beauty; but it would be difficult to find a creature gifted with greater courage, keener instinct, or firmer attachment to his master.

A Bandjarra of the name of Dabi happened to require the loan of a thousand rupees with which to undertake a speculative journey. All the persons to whom he applied, having little faith in his promise, met the request with a refusal. He had a dog called Bheirou, whom he loved better than he could tell. After long hesitation, he resolved to offer this dog as a pledge. His first attempts were unavailing, but he found at last a rich merchant named Dhyaram who accepted the conditions. Dabi promised to return within a year. He bade adieu to Bheirou, commanding him by words and signs to remain faithful during that period to his temporary master. The dog did his duty in every respect; but more than a twelve-month elapsed, and yet no news came of Dabi. The merchant began to believe that he was cheated, and to repent of his over-credulity. At that time the Bandjarra country was much infested by thieves. One dark night the household was suddenly aroused by Bheirou's violent and angry barking. Dhyaram got up. A band of robbers were trying to force their way into his dwelling. Before he had time to set about repulsing them, Bheirou had attacked a couple of the gang. He threw them down and tore them. A third advanced to strike Dhyaram; the dog

seized him by the throat, and the master killed him. This beginning did not encourage the rest: they took to flight. Dyharam, whose life had been saved by the bravery even more than by the vigilance of Bheirou, manifested his gratitude by all sorts of caresses; and considering the debt to be paid with interest, he tried to make the good creature understand that he was no longer a hostage, but free to rejoin his master. Bheirou—and this is the wonderful part of the story—shook his head mournfully, to indicate that a mere verbal order like this, given to him alone, would not excuse him in Dabi's eyes. But at last Dyharam succeeded in persuading him; and after taking an affectionate leave, he made him set off in the direction by which Dabi ought to return.

Now Dabi, whose affairs had detained him beyond the appointed term, was collecting the money to discharge the debt, at a few leagues' distance from his creditor's house. All at once, perceiving Bheirou running to meet him, unattended, he turned pale, believing that the dog had stolen away from Dhyaram's custody, thereby compromising his word of honour. In a fit of rage, heedless of the dog's caresses, he drew his sabre and killed him on the spot.

A few minutes afterwards, to his bitter grief, he found tied to Bheirou's neck a quittance for the thousand rupees signed by the merchant, together with a letter relating the dog's exploits. Inconsolable for his fatal error, Dabi devoted the money to the erection of a monument on the spot where the bloody deed occurred. The people of the neighbourhood still point out this monument to travellers, which is known by the name of Koukarry-Gaou. They also believe that earth taken from Bheirou's grave is a sovereign remedy for the bite of mad dogs.

Our second dog had his troubles too, but of a less tragic kind. He was a spaniel, and his name was Cabriole. His master, the Comte de Brevenile's chef, or man-cook, had brought him up from a puppy, paying particular attention to his fetching and carrying. Cabriole would catch a half-franc piece in the air, and take it to the person named to him, often residing at a considerable distance. When an errand had to be done, he took the basket in his mouth, and went for tobacco, coffee, sugar, cheese, or any other article of daily use which happened to be required in an emergency. Why send a dog, and not a servant? For this good reason. The comte's château is five miles distant from Langres, the nearest market-town. A servant would take three hours to go there and back and make his purchases; the dog, when encouraged to exert himself, did it in three-quarters of an hour. The dog knew all the tradesmen; a card in the basket mentioned what was wanted; and one tradesman sent him on to the next.

One Friday, more unlucky than the rest of Fridays, four persons called at the château. They were asked to stop and dine; the invitation was accepted, and the cook was ordered to prepare a suitable meagre dinner. It was four in the after-

noon, and the unfortunate chef had nothing, absolutely nothing, except kidney beans and lentils. How could he compose a "suitable" dinner with that? His hair almost lifted his cap from his head. "If I had only a little fish!" he groaned, banging his saucepans about in despair. "But I haven't so much as a red-herring. Here, Cabriole; you must help me out of this mess." Cabriole took the basket and his orders, and darted away from the château like an arrow. In twenty minutes he reached the town. The fishwoman to whom he proudly presented himself, glanced at the card, and took six handsome eels out of a tub of water. That the cook might have no doubt of their freshness, she refrained from killing them, merely tying them in a napkin, and putting them into the basket strong and alive. Cabriole thanked her with a thoughtless wag of his tail, and immediately set off on his way back home.

Poor innocent dog! He thought that his charge would be as easy to carry as a pound of coffee. For a while, the eels lay quiet enough; but having their doubts, perhaps, respecting the object of their journey, their heads were soon peeping out of the basket. Cabriole perceived it. Surprised, but not intimidated, he growled and snarled and shook the basket, to make them keep still. The move succeeded; but before long the eels again felt a wish to look about them. This time he set the basket down, and drove them back into it with strokes of his paw. Once more they lay quiet for a minute or two, allowing him to proceed on his journey homewards. But eels are as restless as they are slippery. Not content with looking out, they crawled out, and were making their escape. Cabriole, in a rage, set the basket down, picked them up one by one, and returned them to the basket. As fast as he did so, out they crept again; until, losing patience, he killed them, each and several, by a sharp bite applied to the nape of the neck. He then put them into the basket, and set off for the château at railway speed.

But all this required time. The cook, getting fidgety, had sent forward one of his assistants to see what was the cause of the delay; and to this witness we are indebted for the correct knowledge of what occurred. Cabriole was duly praised and petted; but from that day forth he loathed the sight of fish. If the word "eel" were pronounced in his presence, he ran away and hid himself for two or three days.

Our third canine friend was a military dog. During the First French Empire, every regiment had its dog, whose intelligence, thanks to the soldiers' care, was improved by education and discipline. The Grand Army's dogs were picked up almost everywhere, except in England. They had been recruited in Poland, in Prussia, in Holland, in Saxony, and in Flanders. They were mongrel mastiffs, hounds, Danish dogs, spaniels. But no matter whence they came, they soon turned French. Foreign dogs were naturalised without knowing it.

Rugen is an island in the Baltic Sea, opposite to Stralsund, on the coast of Pomerania.

Fortified both by nature and by art, its situation is exceedingly strong. In time of peace, in consequence of its fertile soil, its salubrious air, and its mild climate, Rügen is a delightful retreat. In time of war, it is an important post, a natural citadel, a formidable fortress, whose possession has been purchased at the expense of many a bloody fight. During the campaign of 1807, this island was comprised in their sphere of operations by the corps commanded by Marshal Davout, and was occupied by an infantry regiment of the line, and by several companies of sappers and miners. The regiment, of course, had a dog—a black and white poodle—named Capucin—not because he was born in a Capuchins' convent in Italy (which would have been a quite sufficient reason), but in allusion to the copper or iron rings by which a gun-barrel is fastened to its stock. The dog's short bark might perhaps have been thought to resemble the snappish report of a musket.

In consequence of a change in the plan of operations ordered by Napoleon the First, the island had to be suddenly evacuated, to carry out a movement in retreat abandoning the whole line of the Pomeranian coast. Every post, every man, was withdrawn; but in such a hasty way that they forgot an advanced sentinel perched on the top of a hillock which commanded the entrance of the port of Rügen. This sentinel was a young soldier named Firmin Bonard, who had scarcely been three years in the service. At present, a soldier who has served three years is considered quite a veteran; at that time, troopers who could reckon three, five, seven, and even nine, years of service, were still called conscripts. Now, Bonard the soldier and Capucin the dog happened to be particularly good friends, bound by the strongest ties of mutual attachment.

The corporal of the post had planted Firmin as sentinel on the hillock exactly at midnight. The latter therefore calculated on being relieved at two in the morning, and also that from two till five he would have three good hours to doze and slumber in the corps-de-garde. So Firmin Bonard beguiled the time by anticipating this supreme indulgence, also by thoughts of his village steeple, of his aged curé's ancient housekeeper, of the haystack where he used to play at hide-and-seek, and sundry other recollections. In this way the minutes slipped slowly by, and the two hours' guard were drawing to a close.

All at once he heard a slight noise. He listened. "It is the corporal coming to relieve guard?" he thought, and prepared to utter the formal "Qui vive?" But the sound, which resembled that of human footsteps, was soon followed by complete silence. "I couldn't be mistaken!" he said to himself. "Besides, my time must now be up." He listened again, still more attentively. Almost immediately, he heard the barking of a dog, who came running forward in his direction. On recognising Capucin's voice, the sentinel looked round him anxiously. Perceiving nothing which

threatened an attack, he wondered what could be the meaning of this nocturnal visit. Before he had time to consider the matter, the animal had climbed the hill and was jumping up his legs. "It's you, Capucin. Very good. You got tired of waiting there; and I am tired of standing here. The air is keen, and I am terribly sleepy. You should have brought the corporal with you. His watch must have stopped. He ought to sell it for old iron and buy a new one."

Capucin's answer was a frenzied bark and a series of mad leaps around his friend.

"I understand," said Firmin, smiling. "You are asking me to dance to warm myself. It's a pity you are not provided with the password and a musket."

Capucin continued to bark, running right and left like a creature possessed. Finding all these manœuvres useless, he ran up to the soldier, pulled him by the coat, and tried hard to pull him away, renewing his efforts with such violence that he tore the soldier's uniform. Firmin, considering this proof of affection more troublesome than pleasant, lost his temper, and gave poor Capucin a kick. The dog, howling at finding himself so cruelly maltreated and misunderstood, retreated to a few paces' distance; but soon returned, heedless of his friend's unkind treatment. All he did now, was to look forgiveness and lick the soldier's hands.

"Be quiet, will you? And take yourself off," said Firmin, harshly, as he threatened him with the butt of his gun, to drive him away. Capucin, finding he could do no good, unwillingly made up his mind to depart. He arrived just in time to go on board with the last detachment of the corps.

At four o'clock he began to lose patience. Discipline forbade his quitting the post; but hunger, which drives the wolf out of the wood, compelled him to forget the Code Militaire. He left his station, and went to the guard-house, muttering to himself: "If anybody deserves to be shot for this, it is not I, but the corporal, who doesn't know his business, and keeps a sentinel on guard six hours at a time."

In the guard-house, not a creature! The only supposition he could form was, that the regiment had gone to occupy another part of the island. He shouldered his gun and stalked off across country in search of the regiment. On the way, he fell in with a farmer ploughing a field. "Can you tell me," he asked him, "in which direction the French have marched?"

"They are gone away," was the startling reply. "They embarked at two this morning, stepping lightly and without uttering a word, in consequence of an order received from the emperor."

"Gone away, leaving me behind! I shall be reported as a deserter! Confound that corporal; he has been my ruin. I now understand what poor Capucin meant. It is not the death I fear, so much as the disgrace."

"Don't take on in that way," said the farmer, in a consolatory tone of voice. "Shrieking never set a broken bone. Stay here, and make the best of a bad business. If the French

come back again, I can prove that it was no fault of yours."

"My good man, you don't know the severity of our rules."

"They will not punish you for a crime you have not committed. Meanwhile, you cannot live on air. You probably were brought up in the country, and are accustomed to do country work?"

"Certainly. I can plough, for instance."

"The very thing for me. I can offer you good board and lodging, with a small weekly payment into the bargain. It will be the best thing you can do, under the circumstances." The soldier heaved a heavy sigh, and slowly gazed all round the horizon, to see whether any of the ships were still visible. Beholding nothing, he said, at last: "I thankfully accept your offer."

"Good!" said the farmer, Peter Baxen. "Come and breakfast at once. We will go on with the ploughing afterwards."

At Baxen's farm the soldier-ploughman had plenty of opportunities of proving his capacity. He found such favour in the farmer's eyes—and in other people's too—that Baxen determined to try and keep him for good and all.

"My worthy fellow," he said one day, "I look upon you almost as a son."

"If my poor old father," Firmin answered, "were not anxiously awaiting my return to France, I would willingly remain in Rugen."

"You can bring him back with you, the next time you go to France. But what I want to say to you now, concerns my daughter."

Firmin coloured up to the eyes.

"Unless I am much mistaken, you and she are very good friends."

Firmin uttered a few unintelligible words.

"The neighbours even say you are in love with her."

"I assure you I never uttered a word which could lead her to suppose that—"

"I know it; and for that very reason I took upon myself to tell her that, if you had no objection, she might have you for her husband."

"And she said—?"

"Not a word; but she threw her arms round my neck and kissed me for a quarter of an hour." A fortnight afterwards, Firmin Bonard was married to the fair-haired Clarissa, Peter Baxen's only daughter.

Four years then elapsed, pretty equally divided between love and labour. His thoughts occasionally reverted to France, but he had almost forgotten his compulsory desertion. The past soon fades from our memory when the present is satisfactory and the future promising.

One morning, the look-out man in the town of Rugen signalled a fleet of ships in the offing. They were men-of-war, carrying the French flag. "The French are coming!" people shouted to each other. "They are going to land!"

Firmin Bonard heard it. "The French are coming!" rang in his ears like the boom of an alarm-gun. It told him that he was a lost man. Nevertheless, a thought struck him which relieved his heart by a glimmer of hope.

He ran home, put on his uniform, seized his

arms, and mounted guard on the very spot where, five years before, he had been uninterestingly abandoned. Meanwhile, boats full of soldiers rowed towards the hillock. In the forepart of one of the boats was a black and white poodle. As it approached the beach, the creature barked with joy. In spite of his anxiety, Firmin's eyes filled with tears as he recognised his old friend Capucin. The dog, unable to master his impatience, jumped into the sea and swam to shore.

As soon as the boats had come within earshot, Firmin "made ready," and shouted at the top of his voice, "Qui vive?"

"Qui vive, yourself?" said the occupants of the first boat, which was filled with officers, composing Marshal Davoust's staff. "Who are you? And what are you doing here?"

"I am a sentinel, keeping guard."

"A pretty sentinel! How long have you been on guard?"

"Five years."

"It is time to come down, then," shouted the officers, laughing.

When Firmin descended from his hill, Capucin ran to meet him half way, barking with joy, and jumping into his arms.

"Poor Capucin! Have it all your own way this time. Do whatever you like. Dirty me, tear my clothes; I shan't send you away. I ought to have made a better return for your attempt to serve me."

Followed by the faithful dog, Firmin joined his former comrades. He gave a plain account of what had happened. By a lucky chance, the corporal, who had forgotten him, and who had since been promoted, belonged to Marshal Davoust's staff. He received his old comrade with open arms. Firmin, in return, invited his countrymen to the farm, where he entertained them with liberal hospitality. The adventure reached Marshal Davoust's ears. He laughed at Firmin's stratagem, and presented him with a discharge drawn up in due form. "I should not like the brave fellow," he said, "to appear before a court-martial, after having kept guard so long."

Firmin continued a farmer. He had a large family, who at present fill the highest and most important offices in the island. They are commonly known as the Sentinel's Family. When the French finally left Rugen, Capucin remained. Like his master, he forgot his military tastes, and devoted himself exclusively to farming.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

PRISON DISCIPLINE.

In 1729, the disgraceful state of the London prisons had reached so horrible a pitch that it became necessary to bring up two of the deputy governors for trial on charges of murder, these trials having been preceded by a parliamentary commission.

Acton, the head warden of the Marshals, and one of his subordinates, named Rogers, were especially exasperated with one Bliss, a refractory carpenter, because he, with six or

seven others, had some time before set a bad example, by attempting to break out through an oven. For this offence Bliss had been thrust for three weeks into the Strong Room, a damp, unwholesome, uncovered place, where a man named Mullinshead was lying in the heaviest fetters.

The dismal Strong Room was the Black Hole of the Marshalsea, dreaded by even the most dauntless highwaymen, and bearable only to toads and rats. Bliss and his abettors were thrown on the ground in this prison-cell in company with a poor wretch who had an iron collar round his neck.

After a time, Bliss made a second attempt to escape, was caught, dragged by the legs over the stones, and horribly beaten with ox sinews. Then the dreadful iron cap was forced on his head—a cap originally made in King William's time for steadyng felons while they were being burnt in the cheek. It had been left behind at the Marshalsea as a mere relic when the other irons had been removed to the county jail. Bliss was otherwise tortured until he confessed who brought him the rope he had used for his second escape. When he was released from the Strong Room, the prisoner's legs swelled, the irons ate into them and became buried in the flesh. There were holes near his ankle, and Acton's men were at last compelled to remove the fetters, which had bitten into the legs as clogs do into a horse's fetlocks. Bliss was kept without any covering but a blanket.

Bliss, being released after several months, went to Southgate to work as a carpenter, but fell ill, complained of inward bruises, and soon after died. Acton was tried for the murder of Bliss at the Kingston assizes on July 6, 1729, but was acquitted.

Other indictments against the prisoner, although they also terminated in acquittal, served to show in a striking way the utter want of any proper management in prisons at this period, and the habitual cruelty and tyranny of the turnkeys and deputies of the too often absentee governors. In all these cases Acton escaped, not because he was not guilty, but because it was difficult to decide how far the cruelty had been Acton's, and how far it had arisen from the exaggeration of his orders by the turnkeys. Bliss's case is quoted as a sample of the rest.

It seems almost incredible that, at this very time, the government should have permitted the Marshalsea to be farmed out. The patent rights were purchased from the Earl of Radnor for five thousand pounds, and there were sixteen shareholders in the concern, all interested in squeezing out fees, starving prisoners, and concealing all acts of cruelty. In the King's Bench, in cases of riot, soldiers were often called in to beat and puncture the turbulent inmates. In Newgate, if a highwayman or murderer had only his pocket full of guineas, he could toss off his brandy, and revel, and brawl till the hour came to press him to death, or to cart him off to the green fields of Tyburn.

But upon Thomas Bambridge, warden of the Fleet, public hatred fell very heavily. A wretch named Huggins had bought the patent of the wardenship of a nobleman, and he sold it to Bambridge. By letters patent, Bambridge was appointed keeper of his Majesty's Old and New Palaces of Westminster, as also warden of his Majesty's prison of the Fleet for life. In 1728, Bambridge was taken into custody, and soon after confined under irons in Newgate; and whilst he was under this confinement, an act of parliament was made, reciting "that his Majesty had been pleased to order his Attorney-General to prosecute at law the said Thomas Bambridge for wilfully permitting several debtors, as well to his Majesty as to divers of his subjects, to escape, and for being guilty of the most notorious breaches of his trust, and the highest crimes and misdemeanours in the execution of his said office; and having, arbitrarily and unlawfully, loaded with irons and put into dungeons and destroyed prisoners put under his charge." Bambridge was deprived of his letters patent.

This Bambridge, who appears to have been a low cheating attorney, was acquitted on his first trial, without even producing witnesses. He continued, however, in close confinement (what a state of law!) for nine months; then admitted to bail; but kept in custody nevertheless till the June following.

The inquiry of the parliamentary committee disclosed the most iniquitous enormities. The prison, in fact, had been merely a shop, and the prisoners had been squeezed for money like apples in a cider-press. Rich malefactors had been allowed their temporary liberty and the power of renewing their crimes. Smugglers were permitted to run their cargoes, and then to quietly return to their wards. A man who owed the government ten thousand pounds was allowed to escape. A certain Dumoy had been several times to France—perhaps for Jacobite purposes—while nominally a prisoner. These sort of pseudo-prisoners were known to the turnkeys under the playful name of "pigeons," and they had bill transactions with the warden. To the poorer and more unprofitable prisoners Bambridge was very cruel; beating them, loading them with irons that made life a misery, and immuring them in more than usually loathsome dungeons. A poor, broken-down baronet, named Sir William Rich, who refused to pay a baronet's entrance-fee of five pounds, was loaded with the largest fetters and thrown into one of the most miserable caves of the prison. Bambridge occasionally threatening him with a red-hot poker, or the loaded guns and ponderous rusty halberds of his body-guard; but there was no burning or beating the money out of the noble baronet, and that was the exasperating part of the business.

The cruel lawyer also, on one occasion, threatened to make his men fire on a certain Captain Mackpheadris (we picture the captain, a gaunt, obdurate man in threadbare uniform laced with copper). The captain becoming

incapable of paying rent, was thrust out of his room, to live and starve in a dreary open yard of the prison, called the *Bare*. The captain being, however, a man of resources, and perhaps accustomed to Flemish campaigns, began, with the true spider-patience, to build a hut in a corner of the yard. It was only a shaky, tent-like structure, fashioned of earth, tiles, and broken bricks, not a house to be envious of. Bambridge, vexed at his debtor's subterfuge for a room, had it pulled down. For other offenders he had "Julius Caesar's Chapel" and the "Upper and Lower Ease," while in the "Lyons' Den" desperate prisoners were strapped to the ground.

Close to the prison there was a sponging-house, kept by Corbett, a man entirely at Bambridge's disposal, who charged every prisoner an entrance-fee of five pounds sixteen shillings and fourpence, the "philazer," the judge's clerk, the tipstaves, and the warden all pouncing on the tormented wretch for their dues. Then there were fees to obtain better rooms and lighter irons, and a six-shilling bowl of punch to be given as a sort of house-warming. Corbett was, in fact, a licensed robber, and there was no law to prevent his theft or his persecutions.

Between the jailer of the Fleet and this Corbett there was sometimes sharp practice in the arrests. On one occasion, a total stranger, an innocent and uninvolved man, while stopping at the grate to talk comfort to the prisoners, and give them charity, was dragged in by Corbett and Co., and not released till he had paid fees and sworn not to institute proceedings. When charitable ladies sent money to discharge the claims against poor men who remained in the Fleet for fees only, Bambridge often concealed many such prisoners, unwilling to let them enjoy freedom again. He was proved, also, to have taken bribes, especially forty guineas and an amber and silver model of a Chinese junk, worth eighty broad pieces, from a poor woman. This wretch, in fact, revelled like a second Jonathan Wild in every black meanness and peculation. For instance, when an Insolvent Act was passed with some little mercy in it, this atrocious rascal required three guineas from each prisoner before he would allow them to enjoy the benefit of the new act.

He had another ingenious trick. Immediately he had beaten a prisoner, or in any way exceeded the law, he preferred a bill of indictment against the sufferer for riot or attempt to escape, to stop his mouth, and prejudice the judges against him.

The committee that examined Bambridge consisted of five noblemen and many eminent commoners. Among them were: General Wade, the great road-maker of the Highlands; Sir James Thornhill, soon after Hogarth's father-in-law; Francis Child, the banker; and Sir Gregory Page, the hanging judge satirised by Pope. The chairman was James Oglethorpe, Esq. The scene is the more interesting to us, because it was excellently painted by Ho-

garth for one of the members, Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk, knight of the shire for Aberdeen.

"On the table," says Horace Walpole, describing this picture, "are the instruments of torture. A prisoner in rags, half starved, appears before them. The poor man has a good countenance: that adds to the interest. On the other hand is the inhuman jailer. It is the very figure that Salvator Rosa would have drawn for Iago in the moment of detection. Villany, fear, and conscience are mixed in yellow, and livid on his countenance; his lips are contracted by tremor; his face advances, as eager to lie; his legs step back, as thinking to make his escape; one hand is thrust precipitately into his bosom, the fingers of the other are catching uncertainly at his button-holes. If this was a portrait, it was the most striking that ever was drawn; if it was not, it is still finer."

This committee, first appointed February 25th, 1728-29, declared Thomas Bambridge, then warden of the Fleet prison, and John Huggins, his predecessor in that office, notoriously guilty of great breaches of trust, extortions, cruelties, and other high crimes and misdemeanours.

Public indignation, once aroused, was not willing to let Bambridge escape. He was tried, May 23rd, 1729, for the murder of a Mr. Castell, who had been forced into Corbett's sponging-house when the small-pox was raging there. Page, one of the most infamous of judges, persuaded the jury to acquit Bambridge; but the widow of Castell fought the case till the wager of battle was claimed, and Bambridge then, rather than fight, selected to be tried again. He was tried again, and was acquitted, but narrowly escaped being torn to pieces by the people. In December of the same year, they were at Bambridge again, and he was tried for stealing the goods of one Elizabeth Berkley, while a prisoner in the Fleet. The articles stolen included Flemish lace, gold lace, plate, and rings. They were worth thirty pounds, and were distrained for fifty-six pounds of rent due to Mr. Huggins, Bambridge's predecessor. Bambridge and his men broke open the door, and forced open her boxes. The poor woman was then turned on the Common Side, without a bed to lie on, and her mind became affected. Bambridge was again acquitted.

At the same session, Huggins, and Barnes, a turnkey, were also tried for the murder of a prisoner named Arne; but in these cases, and with these cases only, Page was merciful, and they, too, were acquitted.

Bambridge then actually petitioned government for compensation, "having been put to great charges and expenses; and, notwithstanding his acquittal, having for nearly seven years last past lost the profits of the several offices which were granted to him, but hath also been incapacitated from exercising his profession of an attorney and solicitor for his support and subsistence.

The petition, of course, proved fruitless, and he eventually destroyed himself.

But it was not only arbitrary cruelties and greedy exactions that made the prisons so infamous and so unworthy of English law and English justice. The freedom permitted by the jailers to all prisoners who had money, was even still more demoralising. However innocent a man was when he entered a prison, he was sure to leave it full of desperate resolutions, callous, heartless, and blood-thirsty. As a person of experience once said, an acquitted highwayman generally returned to the world to find his old captain hung, and himself ready to take his place. An episode of Jack Sheppard's story, as told in the records of the jail chaplain, is a good example of the disgraceful discipline of our old prisons. Sheppard, the son of a Spitalfields carpenter, was in August, 1724, lying under sentence of death in Newgate. In the old prison-house, burnt during the Lord George Gordon riots, there was, inside the lodge, a hatch with large iron spikes. This hatch opened into a dark passage, which led by several stone steps down into the condemned hold. Here prisoners were allowed to show their shaven heads and villainous faces to their often equally ill-favoured friends. It was through this hatch some women of Sheppard's acquaintance passed a file, with which he cut almost through one of the spikes. On the evening Jack's death-warrant arrived, the women came for a pretended last interview, broke off the spike, and dragged the slim thief through the aperture, although the keepers were drinking at the very time at the other end of the lodge. When Jack was caught in Clare-market, and a few months after condemned to death, he became the show of the town, noblemen visiting him to hear his adventures and his entreaties for the royal pardon. Sir James Thornhill published a portrait of him, and he was the lion of the month. Even on the very day of execution, money, sympathy, or friends had procured the incorrigible young rogue favours from the turnkeys; for when searched in the press-room, before ascending the cart, an officer found in his pocket a penknife, with which he had intended to have cut the cords that bound his arms, and to have flung himself from the cart, to escape down Little Turnstile, where the sheriff's mounted officers could not have followed him.

Dangerous mutinies also were not uncommon in the old London prisons. There was a very formidable one in Newgate in 1726. The leader was a blacksmith, named William Gates, alias Vulcan, a deer-stealer, of Edmonton, who had shot two deer in Enfield-chase, killed a keeper, and fired at two others. The man had never been tried for the offence, but had been sentenced to death by the cruel Black Act, 9th of George the First, because he had not surrendered, within forty days, to an order of council read, according to the act, on two consecutive market days in two market towns. He was helped by four of his companions, also under sentence. "These

desperate men took it into their foolish heads," says the astonished ordinary in his quaint account, which seems to have been quaintly interlined by a somewhat sarcastic Old Bailey reporter, "that they would not be hanged. The day on which they were executed, when I came to Newgate to give them their last exhortations and prayers, they would not allow any person to come near them, having got an iron crow into the prison, with which they had forced out stones of a prodigious bigness, and had made the breach two feet deep in the wall. They had built up the stones at the back of the door of the condemned hold, so that nobody could get at them. The keepers spoke to them through the door, but they were inflexible, and would by no entreaties yield. I spoke to them also, representing to them how that such foolish and impracticable projects interrupted their repentance, and the special care they should have taken in improving those few moments to the best advantage; but they seemed inexorable. I said that I hoped they had no quarrel with me. They answered, 'No, sir, God bless you; for you have been very careful of us.' Bailey said, that they would not surrender till they either killed or were killed. It was twelve at night before they began this enterprise; and, to conceal their purpose from the keepers, while part of them were working, the rest sung psalms, that the noise might not be heard. Sir Jeremiah Morden, one of the present sheriffs of London and Middlesex, came with proper attendance, and, desiring them to open the door, they refused it; upon which they [not the prisoners, but the sheriff and his men] were obliged to go up to the room over the hold, where there is a little place that opens, which is made in case of such disturbances. This shutter they opened, but the prisoners continuing obstinate, they [the sheriff's assistants] fired fifteen pistols with small shot among them, not to kill, but to wound and disable them. They retired to the remotest part of the room where the shot could not reach them, yet Barton and Gates, the deer-stealer, were slightly wounded in the arm. At last Sir Jeremiah Morden spoke seriously to them through the little hole above, desiring them to surrender. Barton asked, 'Who are you?' Sir Jeremiah answered, 'I am one of the principal sheriffs.' 'Show me your chain,' says Barton. Sir Jeremiah was so good as to show him his gold chain through the little hole, upon which they consulted, and agreed to surrender. After this they removed the stones for the back [of the] door, and, the keepers entering, Barton snatched a steel tobacco-box in the face of one of them, which made a little noise like the snapping of a pocket-pistol, and then gave him the box."

Imagine prisoners, condemned to death, gaining possession of a crowbar and working down two feet of a massive wall before they were observed by the keepers; and do not fail to observe the small shutter in the ceiling, expressly made for such contingencies!

That excellent man, John Howard, who wrote

in 1776, begins his book by remarks upon the jail fever. This disease was bred in the filth of neglected prisons. It would not, perhaps, have been heeded for another half a century, had it not irreverently, in 1750, carried off the lord mayor, one alderman, two judges, and most of the jury at the Old Bailey sessions of 1750. In 1772 it was again fatal, and that at last awoke the city. Howard found the new jail building at Newgate, and did not much like it. "Without more than ordinary care," says this true philanthropist, "the prisoners in it will be in great danger of the jail fever." The condemned cells were nine feet high, the smaller cells only about nine feet by six. The one double-grated window was three by one and a half. The doors were four inches thick. The strong stone walls were lined with planks, studded with broad-headed nails. In each cell was a barrack bedstead. Criminals, bold enough at their trial, were struck with horror, and shed tears, the turnkeys told Howard, when they first entered those darksome solitary abodes. The noise in the yard was distracting during the prayer-time in the chapel. Visitors to the press-yard at executions paid three guineas to the keeper.

The Fleet had been rebuilt before 1776. Howard describes it as consisting of four long galleries, with rooms on each side, and a cellar floor, called by the debtors Bartholemew Fair. On the first floor were the chapel, the tap-room, a coffee-room, rooms for the turnkeys and watchmen, and eighteen apartments for prisoners. Over the chapel was a dirty billiard-room, kept by a prisoner, who slept in the same room. The Common Side was a large room, with cabins opening from it. These were for men who were insolvent, and who lived on donations and the proceeds of the begging-box and grate. The amusements in the yard were skittles, Mississippi, fives, and tennis. The jailer's tap-house was frequented by butchers and others from the neighbouring market (a most demoralising practice). Every Monday night there was a wine club, and every Thursday a beer club, rioting till two in the morning, and vexing the more sober prisoners. April 6, 1776, there were two hundred and forty-three prisoners; wives and children, four hundred and seventy-five.

In the Marshalsea, Howard found two hundred and thirty-four prisoners. There were four rooms for women, and sixty beds for men; but many of the prisoners slept anywhere about—in the chapel or the tap-room. There were in the prison about forty-six women and children. There was a skittle-ground and a chandler's shop inside the prison. The excellent but intensely matter-of-fact philanthropist is good enough to observe that one Sunday in 1775, when the tapster's beer ran bad, there were no less than six hundred pots of beer brought into this prison from a neighbouring public-house.

The King's Bench prison, in May 1776, contained three hundred and ninety-five prisoners; besides two hundred and seventy-nine of their wives and seven hundred and twenty-five of their children. Two-thirds of these were within

the walls. There was a stocks in the prison, used for the punishment of blasphemers, swearers, and rioters.

We have improved in these matters since 1777. We have now perhaps gone to another extreme. In the twenty-three years preceding 1777, the total number of executions in London was six hundred and seventy-eight; yet far more than that number died in the same period of jail fever. Howard says that he saw nothing abroad that made him blush for his native country but the prisons. He tried successfully to show that idleness, debauchery, disease, and famine were not the necessary attendants of a prison; but though turtle-soup and sweetbreads are not yet the general diet of the Uriah Heaps of our day, we have still, we fear, much to learn before our prison discipline is worthy of our civilisation.

LICENSED TO KILL.

I QUITE agree with Socrates in many things. That eminent philosopher and I completely coincide in our estimate of mere physical science, but on a special point we are heartily and altogether agreed. If I remember right, Socrates designates as the "obstetric art" that department of human knowledge which, to persons circumstanced as I am, is most valuable. He lays down that every child, on his entrance to this world, knows everything, and will answer correctly the most difficult questions, provided his examiner only knows how to put his questions correctly. Shelley, I find, was a believer in this creed, and frightened a nurse into fits by seizing her small charge one day, and demanding to ascertain from it something about the essences of angels. To me the doctrine is most comfortable and cheering. I have the sweet consciousness that I know everything in my inner self, and that it was altogether owing to the obtuseness or ignorance of my examiners that the world was not alive to the extent of my erudition. The incapacity of my questioners in that obstetric art has been the bane of my life. How much the happiness of man depends on the intelligence of others! At school I was deemed a dunce and dolt, and was "kept in" or flogged accordingly, solely because my masters did not interrogate me properly. An infant—I am told that is a correct rendering of the word *pusio*—actually explained to Socrates the doctrine of the squaring of the circle, but then Plato knew how to question scientifically. Unfortunately, my questioners were not of the Socrates order, and I have been a martyr.

My friends—it is right to call them so—designed me for the medical profession, and, to say the truth, I was not averse to become an M.D. I knew a few fast young students, and I liked their life. It was an easy thing, I thought, to walk the hospitals, and assist the great surgeon by holding his instruments and bandages. The art of administering boluses and applying cataplasms seemed easy. Then there was so wide a

field for gathering experience in pauper wards! I believed I could shake my head, look solemn and be mysteriously silent, with the highest practitioners. It was something to frighten my female cousins—dear innocent girls—with appalling accounts of “magnificent operations.” They listened to me with curious interest and no small fear. I think Mary’s regard for me began with fear, and that then (sensible girl as she was) she thought of marrying me. A young surgeon who accomplished such extraordinary feats would, she believed, be a good provider, and would be able to cure her, no matter what happened to her. Unfortunately, before I could obtain a License to Kill, it was necessary to pass examinations. Here, again, arose the great barrier to my fortune. Success, you perceive, did not depend upon myself; it depended altogether on the way in which questions might be put to me: that is, in the obstetric skill of my questioners.

Through my boyhood and youth I had experienced the supreme ignorance of my interrogators. I never could answer them, and an ominous quaking of the heart, as the day of trial approached, warned me not to hope that the Socratic science had been vigorously cultivated now. I had walked the hospitals, attended the prescribed number of lectures, copied out notes made by men who had been fortunate in obtaining somewhat enlightened examiners, I had invested in a skeleton, made up twenty-two pages of the Pharmaceutical Latin Grammar, and tried to master those extraordinary hieroglyphics by which physicians will persist in marking the quantities of ingredients in a draught. May I, a hater of questions, venture to ask a question plainly? Why is it that prescriptions must be written in dog-Latin, miserably abbreviated? What magic is there in writing pil, pul, eyath, haust, instead of the honest English words which these fragments indicate? I know that these abbreviations puzzled me wofully, and that I nearly killed a wretched old woman—luckily, she was only a pauper—by mistaking the meaning of one of these cabalistic symbols. The whole world is behind the age. In village shops I still see monosyllabic signs in gold letters, labelling poisons, where the administrating *Esculapius* is the druggist’s younger son. I compassionate the insides of the village rustics, and think that the laud. tinct. and op. extr. might just as well be labelled “quietness.” But I am in advance of my generation—like Socrates.

The day of my examination came, and never in all my life did I meet with questioners so densely ignorant. They were not able to extract a single answer out of my inner consciousness. I ventured upon an expedient which had proved successful in a case somewhat similar to my own. A dignified examiner blandly asked me what I would prescribe for a case of aneurosis cerebri. I politely replied, “I would implicitly adopt the formula given in his recent valuable paper on the subject.” A smile mantled on his tranquil features, and I believed I was safe.

Unfortunately, fools rush in where angels fear to tread, and one malicious fool—he was the youngest and the most ignorant of all my examiners—asked me to repeat the formula. Now, I never could get off Latin by heart. I never could see the use of it. To make a secret of medicine by hiding it under an outlandish tongue is un-English and unpatriotic. Despair, however, impelled me to violate my principles, and I endeavoured to supply an answer. I do not precisely remember what prescription I gave; but I know there was a general start among my examiners, and one of them rather stiffly said: “Young gentleman, that dose would kill a mammoth on the spot.” I was plucked.

My meeting with Mary was rather trying. She had rightly expected great things of me, for she did not know how great was the stupidity of men in high positions. The student who had operated most successfully in excising aneurism of the aorta, and restoring by artificial vertebrae the back-bone of a railway victim, could do anything, she thought. She, too, began to question me. Did I love her, as fondly now as then? Did I wish our engagement to continue? Would I be content to wait? &c., &c. These were intelligent questions nicely put, and, of course, I answered them most satisfactorily. But when she inquired, What I intended to do now? What medical school would I study in? When I should “go in” again? When she did this, and put other interrogatories of a similar kind, I lamented her deficient acquaintance with the Socratic theory, and was silent.

In my despair I hired “a coach.” This gentleman put into my hands a very little book in dreadful dog-Latin, containing answers to all imaginable questions. He directed me to learn by rote, every day, two or, if possible, three pages, and then for one hour daily he tortured me by putting the same question in every possible variety of form. He said that the one reply might serve for twenty queries, and he trusted that, by putting the questions in every imaginable shape, he would anticipate my examiners. He worked hard with me, and I mastered three hundred replies to three thousand imaginary questions. I was well coached, and could certainly repeat much more of the Pharmacopœia than I ever understood, but what of that? Disease was to be cured by medicine; medicine was prescribed by symbols: given the type of the disease and the symbols, all was easy.

I went before a Board in Scotland; but neither my coach nor I had calculated that I would be called upon, not only to write out prescriptions when the types of disease were given, but to translate any prescriptions my examiners might think of puzzling me with. I broke down here—broke down utterly. Next day, I found appended to my ill-used name, this note: “Lamentably ignorant—could not translate a prescription.” I venture to say it was not my function to translate a prescription; that was the druggist’s business. But remonstrance was vain, and one of my ex-

aminers insolently said, that he thought I had better devote myself to agriculture.

And now, more than ever, I had to mourn the ignorance of mankind. Everybody questioned me; everybody interrogated me unscientifically; of course, I was unable to give accurate or satisfactory replies. It is a fearful thing to be in advance of your generation, and to be possessed of theories which the generality of mankind cannot appreciate. Mary and her mother had come up to Edinburgh; the excuse was shopping; but they really came to share my anticipated triumph, and they witnessed only my fall. Mary was what unfeeling souls call a "sensible girl;" she had a little money of her own, and knew how to take care of it. On the evening of my examiners' failure, as I sat beside her—we were alone—she pressed my hand, and asked me, "What I really had to live upon?" A question so difficult to answer was never put, even to me. I fenced with it, played with it, tried to laugh it off; but Mary's blue eyes—grey at that moment—were fixed upon me. Minerva had grey eyes, I believe, but I do not like the character of Minerva. So, at last, I pretended to be angry, and got up a passion, but it was useless. Mary was very quiet, and very still. Gently disengaging her hand from mine, she said, "It would be madness to marry, unless I had some profession. She would wait any length of time for me; but it was better for both that we should not meet again until I had made some advance towards obtaining a livelihood."

I began to think that ignorance was contagious; for when I asked myself, what was I to do now, I could give myself no answer. (Mary is now hemming near me, unconscious that I am writing about that weary time, and she has forgotten the angry outbreak of passion which accused her of selfish and mercenary motives, when I had only reason to be angry with myself.)

A means of escape was opened to me by one who had been as unfortunate in his examiners as I had been. I had noticed at the door of a fine house in a fashionable street a crowd of poor sickly wretches, who swarmed upon the steps every morning from ten until eleven o'clock. At first I supposed the owner of the house to be a philanthropist, who gave out soup or bread tickets. But many of the men had ugly bandages about their heads, or their arms were in slings, and some supported themselves on crutches. The women were pale and worn-faced, many of them had children in their arms, whose low moans or piercing cries occasionally betrayed sickness or pain. One day, as the door opened to admit one of the number and let out another, the crowd parted for a moment, and I read, upon a bright brass plate of portentous size, the name of Theophilus Herbert Smith, M.D., surgeon and accoucheur. Can this be my Smith? I thought. Smith, of my old class, who was as unhappy as myself? Yes, it was my Smith. He had obtained his degree,

Smith was licensed to kill. I found out that Smith had bought a practice—that Smith prescribed for beggars as the best way of advertising. I resolved to see Smith and ascertain how this thing was to be done.

We had a jolly evening together, Smith and I, and a hearty laugh at those solemn examiners who had tried to puzzle us rather than to ascertain what we knew. It was a paying concern, this of Smith's, and I can vouch for the excellence of his claret. He laughed me out of my despair, told me how to proceed, and inquired after Mary. I do not precisely remember how that night ended, but I think I offered to prescribe gratuitously for all my landlady's family during the course of their natural lives, before I went to bed.

I am a benevolent person, for the world is prospering with me. I can afford to put all aspirants for a License to Kill, up to a wrinkle. Be it, then, known to all who meet with undiscriminating examiners, that there is a medical practitioner in Glasgow—a regularly qualified member of the College of Physicians—who can furnish a candidate for a dispensary or hospital with a medical diploma, for a consideration. The University of Giessen considerably grants degrees in absentia to all who can afford to pay for the accommodation. Money makes not only the man, but the doctor. The Glasgow practitioner will equip anybody with a diploma, for the small sum of thirty-seven pounds fifteen shillings—a fleabite when we think of the advantages to be gained. You pay twenty-two pounds by post-office order or bank-note bill at Giessen, and fifteen pounds ten shillings to the Glasgow practitioner. I suspect the first sum to be all that the liberal University of Giessen obtains, and that the fifteen pounds ten shillings is the honorarium or fee of the Glasgow practitioner. I think so, because he emphatically directs that that sum should be paid to him "here." In his letter, stating terms, the Glasgow practitioner informed me that, as "he was about to take out four medical diplomas at Giessen, and four from Pennsylvania, that week," I had better forward my money at once. There was an air of business about the transaction which delighted me. There were no examinations—no unscientific questionings—no writing out or translation of abominable prescriptions. You paid your money, and you got your degree. You could order a huge brass plate, with the magic letters, M.D., engraven on it, the moment you got your receipt for the money. The arrangement was most agreeable to me. I closed the matter at once. Mary discreetly forbore to ask any useless questions. She helped me to purchase my present business. I keep a bevy of wounded and ailing paupers as well as Smith, and I think my claret is as good as Smith's.

I found shortly afterwards that the Pennsylvanian degree possessed a great advantage. It could be obtained antedated ten or fifteen years. Once I was bitten with a mania for collecting ancient coins, and want-

ing "a brass" of Caligula to complete my set of Roman emperors, I visited a dealer in antiquities who trafficked in such commodities. The old man was ill, but his assistant, having searched in vain for "a brass" of Caligula, gravely told me that he would have one made for me in two days, if I gave the order." He stunned me for the moment; but I gave the order, thinking that this coin would pass muster amongst the rest;—perhaps half my collection was formed of similar forgeries. So with medical degrees. It is an enterprising American agent who supplies this article in London. I do not know whether he deals also in wooden nutmegs, dummy clocks, or corn fixings, but he has a variety of diplomas, suited to the taste of all purchasers. There is evidently competition in the market, for his charge is but thirty-two pounds in toto. You can obtain a diploma dated five years back, ten years back, fifteen years back, if old standing as an M.D. be desirable, "without additional charge."

All this is most desirable to gentlemen in my position. The public seldom look beyond the brass plate upon the door, and if your diploma with its flaring seal be enclosed in a massive gilt frame, and hung up in your consulting-room, your respectability is established. Poor-law guardians have a proper respect for the pockets of ratepayers, and are by no means too inquisitive as to the source of your degree. The position of physician to a workhouse or dispensary gains a man other and more lucrative practice. A discreet treatment of a wealthy patient may make your fortune. Consult the idiosyncrasies of your patient, and lean as much as possible towards nature. If, as in my own case, you buy your degree from an American bagman or a Scotch practitioner, and you fall in with a wealthy patient, be careful to prescribe nice things; should there be an appearance of danger, call in some celebrated physician. As to the paupers, we all know that death is a relief to them. And I never heard of any objection made by guardians to a poorhouse doctor who was followed by the undertaker as by a shadow.

But as if providence now especially favoured the victims of examiners, the General Medical Council are now mysteriously moved to benefit them still more. A portion of that body proposed, on the 5th of June last, that the diploma of any foreign university should be recognised, on proof being given that that university had adopted a satisfactory curriculum of medical study. No proof is required that the holder of a diploma really attended in person the prescribed course of study. The diploma is the sole test; consequently, if the proposition of the Medical Council be carried out, every purchaser of a diploma in absentia will rank, so far as the title M.D. is concerned, with the most eminent British graduates in medicine.

There is a dark as well as a bright side to every picture. The upholders of what I, and many like me, consider to be a monopoly,

oppose this generous concession of the General Medical Council. The British Medical Association have been recently feasting, physically as well as intellectually, in the Irish metropolis. Sir Dominic Corrigan, president of the Queen's College of Physicians, actually entertained the Association with an account of the manufacture of medical degrees, to which I owe my position and my Mary! Nay, he exhorted the members of the association to combine with him in opposing the liberal and enlightened proposal of the Medical General Council. Now, if Sir Dominic Corrigan carries his point, poor-law guardians will be compelled to pay something more than seventy-five pounds yearly for a doctor to physic paupers; and that, I submit, is a violation of the British constitution. Why should there not be free trade in physic as well as in everything else? Sir Dominic would establish in every county in England, a board of examiners—the very word is horrible to me—to test the qualifications of candidates for the degree of M.D. Nothing more disastrous to gentlemen like myself, who cannot translate a prescription, could be devised. The rates would be increased by one farthing in every pound, and a nutritious hospital dietary would be established in every workhouse in the kingdom. I really cannot see why a military officer should be allowed to purchase power to lead eight hundred men to death, if men who are unable to answer medical examiners should not purchase the Pennsylvania or Giessen degree, and be licensed to Kill.

HOWARD'S SON. A STORY OF THREE DAYS.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I. ARBOUR-HILL.

THE marriage had been long talked of in the district, but had come about in a quiet imperceptible way. The Captain Hallam who was to marry, had been quartered a few miles off from Arbour-hill, the house where the marriage was to be. He was asked over, and rode over pretty frequently, first, to get rid of ennui—afterwards, from a very natural interest, as those who saw the young girl, who was the precious stone of that house, could testify. The officer was a manly honest officer, fairly well-looking, with lively tastes and accomplishments, had good connexions, and was tolerably well off in the world. All the good people of the place were sincerely glad "that the Winters had got him;" those who were not such good Christians talked with a little depreciation of picking up a man "in a marching regiment," with only "his pay to keep himself on." The house where the captain had found his prize was just such a solid, handsome, and inviting casket as might hold such a treasure. It was in the green lanes of a warm and sheltered green country; it stood alone, as if it were in a vast demesne of its own, and yet it was only surrounded by a small meadow or two. The road that led to it was a by-road; the vil-

lage of Arbour was a mile and a half off. The house was old and yet new—burly and portly, full and contented, like an old-fashioned well-to-do gentleman, who yet went with the times, and wore as much of the modern dress as would fit him. The red of the bricks was ripe and genial. As gig or coach drove by on the high road, the driver or passengers got a peep of crimson that warmed and comforted them. The windows were bright, and set off with fresh clear paint, and over the old roof rose a little cupola, fresh and trim, though about as antique as an old cocked-hat. Between the road and the house was a tiny lawn, with cheerful beds of scarlet geraniums flowering in huge hillocks, and a bit of balustrade that gave a hint of terrace. This was Arbour-hill—as seen from the top of the passing coach, pronounced “an uncommon snug place” by the outsiders, and where Mr. Winter, who farmed in a “jolly” way, and Mrs. Winter, and Miss Lucy Winter, the jewel of the jewel-case, lived all the year round.

Inside, too, it was a miracle of comfort and brightness, airy to a degree, with the old-fashioned rooms, and the quaint twist of the stair, but with none of that old-fashionedness which brings dampness and strange unseen burrows and decay, and drifts up to a sensitive nostril sudden and unpleasant gales. And there were alterations and additions, and the rather straitened dining-room had been expanded into a handsome modern room. It was the most comfortable and compact of places. They said to Winter, “How did you light on this place? Where did you hear of it? What would you take for the plant and good will now, lock, stock, and barrel?” At which proposal Lucy Winter cried out in piteous protest, “Oh, papa!”

With the exception of a little girl only five or six years old, this Lucy Winter was the only child, a gay, handsome, impetuous girl of seventeen, all flash and impulse. Some one calls her from the hall as she is heard carolling above, and down she “swings” the little twisted stair, with a sort of spring, “hand-over-hand,” as though she were a sailor coming down to the deck. It is a picture to see her as she stands with a little tinge of colour in her cheeks, pushing back her tossed hair, of which she had abundance of a fine honest auburn, perhaps a little rough too, and with a delightful smile of happy interrogation, says, “What is it, papa?”

A pleasant sight it was to see her running round the gardens. It was yet more pleasant to see her alight on the steps between the little tiers of gorgeous flowers that made a sort of porch to the house, in her habit and hat after her ride, when she would turn round with her cheeks flushed and hair that would be rebellious and in confusion, to look at her pony as he cantered round to his stable without a groom. She would give him a little touch of her whip, and he would frisk away, to her delight throwing up his heels as a

sort of salute, the family looking on from the windows. But it was for a horse she sighed—a grown-up horse, a real horse; for this pony was a mere plaything. She longed to go flying over the fields and ditches to join the Green Shiel Hunt. But her father, fond and indulgent in everything, from sheer alarm could not bring himself to agree to the horse.

Now, was Captain Hallam coming very often, and brought as often a delicately-shaped mare with a skin like deep brown satin—a “thing that a child might ride.” And by dint of these excursions and exercises it had come to the stage with which the neighbours were now so busy. Mr. Winter, an “amiable, good man,” and a retired clergyman, had reluctantly given his consent, for he could not endure the idea of losing his child. But there were fervent promises of being always with him, and constantly coming to stay—a pleasant fiction, which no one believed in, as Captain Hallam was in “a marching regiment,” whose turn for Indian or colonial duty was about two years away. However, there was a long reprieve.

There had been busy times in the bright house, preparing. But there was no “fuss” or agitation. The necessary “outfitting” was only a sort of pleasure and excitement, all the family taking part and enjoying the selection. There was no sudden agony, no breaking down in tears over the finery as it comes home, which makes each piece of silk and lace, to the fond mother’s heart, a suit of graveclothes. For the arrangement was, that there was only to be a week’s “honeymoon,” as it is called, and then “Lucy Hallam” was to return, the captain’s regiment being only a short distance away.

It had come very close; the day after to-morrow was the festival. How many times had the lively girl flown up and down the little stairs between the hall and the upper rooms, where the finery was laid out, and where the village milliner, employed out of good nature, but under directions, was doing some good substantial country work? There, too, was a sort of little bazaar, where the friends’ presents were laid out. But the excitement of the day had set in towards three o’clock, when there was heard a peculiar sound of “pawing” up the little avenue, and when Lucy, rushing to the window, proclaimed, in musical tones, to all the house that “there was a lovely darling of a horse walking up the avenue led by a man with a letter!” The horse was a darling, indeed, with the most elegantly shaped aristocratic limbs, and an air of true aristocratic breeding. The letter was from a friendly squire who bred horses, and had always admired her ardour. He was an honest old bachelor, and it was a very delicate little offering, and offered with a rough affection. No wonder Lucy said openly, and with fervour, that “she could kiss him.”

The day after to-morrow was to be the day. Mr. Winter was to “marry” his daughter, though he declared he had forgotten all rites and offices, it was so long since he had put on a surplice. It was a long time from the days when he had

been toiling as a miserable curate on sixty pounds a year, until a relative died and left him well off. He would have gone on with his curacy, but the place did not agree with his wife, and he could not bring himself to what *he* thought the licensed simony of purchasing an advowson. But he had been promised the reversion of the village rectory—not on the death of the old incumbent, whom they all liked, but on his retirement, which was not far off. Here now was the day close at hand, and a pleasant night, the last but one though, yet still a little festival. When the passengers on the up-coach, going by about eight o'clock, saw the little "box" blazing cheerfully away like a bright lantern, to them it looked more than ever "snug," the very essence of snugness and warmth. If they could have drawn up the yellow blinds and peeped in, they would have seen two pictures of warmth, colour, happiness, and comfort. One was in the dining-room, with its sea-green walls, and where Mr. Trail, the grey-haired vicar, and Doctor Legge, the village doctor—who, it was said, knew more of the moon and stars than of physic—and Captain Hallam, and a chosen friend and brother-officer, Hillier, who was to be his "best man," and the host, were sitting round the fire taking claret.

The ladies had just gone, had crossed the hall, and were drawing in to their fire, which makes up the other picture of warmth and comfort. Mrs. Trail and her daughter, a darling friend of Lucy's, were staying in the house. They were all drawing in closer to the fire, to continue a little subject more confidentially, which had been just touched on as they left the dining-room.

"Oh, mamma," said Lucy, "he is certain to come. He promised."

"I am sure he will, dear," said her mamma, "and for a reason that I know."

"But what an interesting character," said Mrs. Trail. "The world is not so bad as my dear Trail preaches, when there are men with such deep feeling as that."

"My dear," said Mrs. Winter, "I could not describe it. I assure you it haunted me like a nightmare for months after. It was really terrible, his rage and grief mixed together. At times I thought his reason would go, or *had* gone. Men *can* love their wives, you see."

Lucy, all white muslin, and like a blooming flower, from some instinct glanced over at the glass, and perhaps coloured. Was she thinking how this affection was as nothing to that of her Captain Hallam?

"You know," went on Mrs. Winter, "I being Colonel Howard's cousin, and the only woman relative (and knowing each other as children), could do this, which I think no one could have courage to do. It was a dreadful business altogether, from beginning to end, and in fact, only for me—poor Edward, his brother, who really was innocent in the matter—"

"He had a brother, then?" asked Mrs. Trail, getting interested.

"A dear fellow," broke in Lucy, impetuously;

"a dear good fellow. Do you remember how he ran and stopped my horse, mamma?"

"Yes, indeed, dear. But for him I don't know what would have happened."

"That was the worst part. He talked of Edward as a criminal, and of pursuing him, and bringing him to justice; and this idea of vengeance took possession of him. So you may imagine what a duty *I* had. I never went through so much. But I soothed him at last."

"I still say," said Mrs. Trail, "there is something most interesting about him. It seems all so natural, even that fury and grief—"

"Ah, but if you knew it all," said Mrs. Winter, stirring the fire, and drawing her low-cushioned chair closer. "It is no family secret—"

"You never told me, mamma," Lucy said, standing up and looking in the glass.

"Because you were a child, dearest," said her mother, smiling; "now you are to be a lady, and are entitled to hear everything."

The answer to this compliment was Lucy's going over impetuously, and putting her arms about her mother's neck, and covering her with kisses. Her mass of hair all came tumbling down over both their faces like a mass of ivy that has been blown from its support. "Tell us," she whispered, "about Howard."

CHAPTER II. COLONEL HOWARD.

"THEY will be ten minutes at their wine yet," said Mrs. Winter, "and Howard's story won't take five. You know that my uncle Sir Philip and his wife were proud—in fact, were called 'the proud Howards'—and as their estate was a little encumbered, they made up their minds that William, our colonel, should make a splendid marriage—good blood and good money—and retire. When he was with his regiment in Ireland they had actually arranged it all—found out a rich plain girl, of the very highest family—I won't tell her name now, as it is all past and gone—and negotiated the marriage. They even got him six months' leave of absence, and wrote to him at Dublin to come over at once. What do you suppose was the answer they got?"

"I can guess, mamma," said Lucy, already absorbed, her fine eyes beginning to enlarge.

"So can I," said Mrs. Trail. "He was engaged to some one else."

"Not only engaged, but married; married to a handsome Irish girl who came out at Dublin Castle and the balls, and whose father was descended from a chieftain, I think: which, of course," added Mrs. Winter, without any sarcasm, "was all well in its way; but I *believe* the poor *Mahoneys*—that was the name—had nothing to support the family but their daughter's face and flirting. His estate, such as it was, was in the Encumbered Estates Court at the time. He had been married some months. You may conceive all that took place. Sir Philip got a stroke of apoplexy from fury, and was near dying. It was not unnatural that they

should be thus shaken, for rank and station was *their* life and blood. The couple had been married some months. The one of the family, however, who was most furious was Edward, William's brother. He went over to Dublin, saw him and her, and poured out a torrent of reproaches, and even insults."

"Oh, mamma!" cried Lucy, with a burst of reprobation; then checked herself.

"Yes, dear, your friend lost his good sense and restraint just for *that* once. By-and-by William became colonel, and a very young colonel; and then his regiment was suddenly ordered away to India. *She* was very delicate, and the physicians said she must not be taken there. In fact, she was more delicate than he thought—perhaps the Dublin Castle and the Dublin balls—no matter. He did not know what to do at first, but took a sudden resolution. He came to me to tell me. I confess I was astonished when I heard it, and was strongly against it; for I knew what was the temper of Sir Philip. His resolution was to go to them straight, appeal to their generosity for his unprotected wife, and throw himself on their goodness, which he said he knew. He did so. How do you suppose he succeeded?"

"I know he succeeded," said Lucy, half starting from her chair, "for Edward was there, and he is the most generous forgiving fellow!"

"I never was so astonished," went on Mrs. Winter, "as when he wrote to me that he *had* succeeded—when he said they had behaved in a manner he dared not have expected—not with great warmth, certainly, but still with justice and calmness. They said, if he liked, she might stay with them while he was away. I heard afterwards that she shrank from the idea, and begged that she might stay anywhere rather than with them. What she really wished was to go back to her own people, but she knew that they were of a quality that her husband shrank from, and she did not even name them."

"What was she like, mamma?" asked Lucy, abruptly.

Mrs. Winter paused, and looked round on them smiling.

"I never saw her myself, but you recollect our going up to town to have your photograph done?"

"To be sure, mamma; and thirty were taken; and M. Le Bœuf asked to be allowed to have more taken off for private sale."

"Well, she was like that," said her mother, laughing—"at least, so Howard says. I sent him one when I asked him to come, and you never saw what an eager agitated letter he wrote, asking where I got it, what had I been doing? That is the real thing that I believe brings him here. We might as well have thought of drawing a Trappist from his cell."

"How strange!" said the ladies. And Lucy, with that most natural instinct which guided every motion, stood up and tossed her head before the glass to see *what* the "likeness" must look like.

"I am not going to make this a long story,"

said Mrs. Winter, "so I will be short. He went to India, was to arrange his exchange there, and be home in a year. She went to his relations, poor soul!"

There was pause.

"They were bitter proud people, with very hot sense of injury. *She* was easily cast down. They had never forgiven her or him, though I believe they tried to do so. Edward never had forgiven, and always said his brother had been shamefully and cruelly taken in. He came there, and said she was 'vulgar.' In short, she was miserable. They gave her no rest, without, I believe, intending to make her miserable. She was delicate. Her spirits sank. She made no bother. Very soon little Fred, Howard's son, was born, which only made Lady Howard more bitter against her. In short, when about eight months of the year had run out, and the exchange had been made, and we at home did not know it, and when Howard might think of coming back, she began to give way. Ah! They were very harsh to her—a poor stranger in the land—and Lady Howard, I believe, wore her out with the harsh and cruel things she was always saying—how that she had ruined them all, and disgraced their family, with more to that effect. At last, when a letter had actually set out, flying home with the joyful news that Howard was to start in a week, her final sickness set in, and she pined away out of this world. They did not reproach themselves, for they were not conscious of having done anything. The one that was shocked, as though he had been suddenly wakened up from a dream, was Edward."

"I know it, mamma!" said Lucy, impetuously. "I could have told you that; he is full of feeling."

"He is," said her mamma, smiling. "Well, we may conceive Howard's arriving to find such dreadful news waiting him. Edward met him in France to tell him. It was terrible. And yet it was not so much grief as fury. He called Edward," added Mrs. Winter, in a low voice, "murderer. And he said he would live for no other end than to reckon with them all one by one."

There was another pause. She went on:

"This was only a burst of insanity on Howard's part. A year after, when he was composed, he told them that he could not bear to see them, and that he dared not forgive them. Since then, seven years ago, he has wandered about with his son. The old grief and fury have given way, and gradually, I think, a love the most overpowering for this child—a love that is increasing every day and every hour—is softening him; and the most wonderful proof of his being softened is his coming here."

"And the boy?" asked the vicar's wife.

"A darling!" said Lucy, running to the table. "Look here!" And she brought over her photograph album.

In a moment they were all admiring a little fellow in a Scotch dress, leaning, his hand in his pocket, with a smile of composure—the smile of

a "boy of the world"—against a very low table. He had a charming air of gracious composure. The ladies agreed he was indeed a darling.

"Now, mamma, tell about what we have settled."

"Oh yes," said Mrs. Winter. "Poor Edward, who really never did anything in the matter, and yet has been bitterly contrite ever since, and has tried again and again to see his brother, is to be here to-morrow. Do you see now?"

"Ah, yes," said the vicar's wife. "But still, if he is in the same temper—"

"But Lucy has a plan."

"Leave it to me," said Lucy, pacing round and round the room in delight. "I have my plan, and it shall succeed. Hush!" She held up her finger. Was it the gentlemen coming in? Yes, their voices were in the hall. But Lucy heard another sound. In country houses, ears are as trained as the ears of Indian hunters, and can hear a sound of wheels on gravel even at the lodge gate.

Mrs. Winter started up. "It must be Howard, dear!" The gentlemen came in, in delightful spirits. Mr. Winter and his wife went out into the hall.

CHAPTER III. THE SON.

THROUGH the open door, in the dark night outside, a chaise was waiting. In a moment those round the bright fire in the drawing-room heard the sound of shuffling and pattering feet. In a few minutes more the door was opened gently, and Mrs. Winter's voice was heard. "Will you come in here, Cousin Howard?"

A tall gentleman, with a sunburnt face and large brown moustache, and the softest of blue eyes, advanced through the doorway, and then drew back irresolutely. He held "Howard's son" by the hand, who was in a dark little Scotch dress, and who looked round on all the company with a pleasant smile of greeting.

"I am afraid," began Colonel Howard, "that after our journey—"

But he was interrupted, for, with cheeks glowing and eyes flashing, Lucy came from the other end of the room straight to him, and said :

"How are you, Cousin Howard? I am Lucy!"

He half started back, and seemed to shade his eyes from the lamp. "You?" he said. "You? Ah, yes. The picture! I am glad to see you, dear," he said, taking her hand affectionately, "and am delighted to hear about all this. But I am ashamed coming in this way—a dusty way-worn traveller."

Every one remarked what a sweet soft voice he had, and a gentle address, while to ladies he had a sort of reverential courtesy with a faint bloom of "old fashion" on it, but which was not the less welcome.

Mrs. Winter eagerly said these were only neighbours, and these "neighbours" with delicacy drew away, and sat in different parts of the room. But the father's eye wandered over

to his son, who, having already introduced himself, was the centre of a group of ladies. He was sitting on one of the low chairs "nursing" one of his little stocking feet, and talking away about their journey with great volubility. He was telling them of his travels, and how he was not in the least tired. He had very delicate little features, a little nose, a pretty mouth, a fair skin, and his father's soft eyes. "I was not in the *least* sick in the packet," he said, still nursing his little leg. "I never am—neither I nor papa. There was a French child, though. You should have seen him!" And little Fred laughed and crowded over the abasement of the hereditary enemies of his country. "Party here to-night? Papa doesn't like parties," he went on, "nor do I. Do you play games here? I can play."

They were charmed with him; he prattled on with such composure. The captain had introduced himself, not with that mock respect and burlesque "humblebugging" with which young men "draw out" children, and whom they use merely to show themselves off. This cruelty is merely offensive, and is often felt by sensitive childish minds, and often a wistful little face turns anxiously to search the empty one that is busy with this folly. "How d'ye do?" said the boy, graciously. "I am very glad to have the pleasure of knowing you. Would you tell me, please," and he hesitated a little, "who the lady is, over there, that you were talking with?"

The captain laughed. "Oh, that is the prettiest, finest young lady in the world. At least I think so."

"Not in the world," said the boy, shaking his head gravely. "Because you have not seen *all* the young ladies in the world. But still—oh yes, she is very pretty."

"Then why are you so curious about all this, Mr. Howard? I declare I am beginning to be a little jealous."

"Ah," said the boy, quickly, "you are going to marry her?"

"Yes, you have guessed it," said the captain; "am I not a happy fellow?"

"Indeed I think so," said the boy, swinging one leg, and in the same wistful sincere way. "She is very nice—much nicer than the French ladies."

Lucy came running over.

"Here she is herself," said the captain, gaily, and then added, in a half whisper, "I won't tell her what you said—about her not being the finest and prettiest young lady in the world."

"I didn't mean *that*," said the boy, colouring, and stepping back with a little defiance; "you know I would not say so."

Lucy was down on her knees, holding his hands and looking into his face. "What is it that you don't mean, dear?" she asked. "Tell me—we are to be the greatest friends."

He shook his head. "No, no."

"What! You refuse me?"

"No; but you know," he said, hesitating, and still swinging on one foot—"you know you are to marry *him*, and there won't be time."

"But we shall meet afterwards," she said, still on her knees, and holding his hands, "and you must promise to come and stay with me."

"And with *him*?" asked the boy, with a knowing look in his eye. "He will be the *husband*—and if he does not choose—"

"But I do choose, and always will choose—if you will do us the honour, that is. Recollect, it is an engagement; you come very soon; I choose. Besides, whatever Lucy chooses I choose."

Young Fred took the hand that was held out to him, and shook it.

"The only thing," he said confidently, "is papa. He is very particular about my going anywhere by myself—that is, he does not wish that I should go anywhere without *him*. And I don't wish. When you come to know papa, you will like him very much. We go everywhere together. We have travelled an immense deal together, papa, and I, and Andy."

"And who is Andy, dear?" said Lucy, still on the carpet; "tell me."

"Bless me!" said the little fellow. "Don't you know Andy? He is our servant—our own servant"—in a confidential tone—"He came with poor dear mamma from Ireland (I never saw mamma that I can remember), and papa and I have agreed that we are never to part with Andy. Papa talks a great deal to him, but he does not like my talking much to him, as papa says I might learn to speak like Andy, who has a strong brogue. But papa says that should make no difference in his character, because he is the most faithful and trustworthy man that ever lived. And I assure you I *feel* it a good deal, not talking to Andy, because I *know* he is good. And papa means, when Andy gets old and lame, to pension him off; and, when I am grown up, I shall pension him too; for I like Andy, and should wish to be kind to him; and when you come to know him, you will like him too."

They listened to these little assurances with great pleasure, the little man was so earnest and assured. Captain Hallam looked across to Lucy with delight.

"Give me a kiss, you darling!" she said. "I like you as if I had known you from a child."

The little man put forward his cheek with great dignity.

"And I like you," he said; "and when *he* said you were the fairest young lady in the world, I did not mean to deny it—indeed no. I should not be so unpolite—no, indeed."

"Give me another kiss, you pet!" said Lucy, in great delight.

Now was heard a gentle voice calling, from the side of the room: "Fred! Fred! take care you are not talking too much, and tiring our friends."

He walked over himself. The little man went to meet him, and took his larger hand.

"Yes, papa. Come and talk—do. Oh!"—to the little circle—"he can talk, papa can; you'll be *deelighted*."

They all smiled.

"This little fellow and I," said Colonel Howard, in his gentle half-apologetic voice, "have been great companions. We have travelled and seen a great many things together—have we not, little man?"

"Yes, papa," said the little man, looking up at him; "and we are to see the world regularly when I get bigger—he has promised me—and I am *never* to go to school."

"Can you sing or play?" said Lucy.

"No, no," said Colonel Howard, a little hastily; "he will only tire you."

"Just as papa pleases," said the little man, with a bow. "Some people like my singing; others, as papa says, get tired."

"Nonsense!" cried the captain, eagerly. "Do sing for us; we shall take it as a great favour."

"Do, dear," said Lucy.

"Would you like it, really?" asked the little man.

"Indeed we all would, and I particularly."

"Well, papa; may I?"

"As these ladies are so kind," said the colonel, looking round doubtfully; and he walked slowly back towards the fire, and sat down by his cousin.

Without the least shyness, the little man looked round on all the company, and began a French chanson—*CADET ROUSSEL*—with a burden:

"Ah! ça! oui! vraiment!
Cadet Roussel a trois enfans,"

and which he sang with the greatest seriousness. There was great applause when he had finished.

"Oh, I can sing other things," he said, "in quite a different style. There was one song which Andy taught me; but," he added, with sudden earnestness, "that was *long* before papa wished that I should not speak so *much* to him—it was indeed—though papa might not like it on *that* account. But, oh! it is such a *very* funny Irish song; and if you heard Andy sing it—"

Lucy had run over to the fireside with the request. She was whispering to Colonel Howard.

"You won't refuse me? Let the dear boy sing. He is getting quite at home with us all. Do let him—Andy's song—do it!"

Colonel Howard, half smiling, half grave, made a protest. "For shame, little man," he said; "he picks up all these low songs; though, indeed," he added, correcting himself, "he never sings them without consulting papa. Well, yes, this once more, as these ladies and gentlemen are so kind as to call for it."

Holding Lucy's hand, with his knee on the sofa, and a steady serious look into the faces of all the company, he struck into "MULLIGAN'S WEDDIN'," in which his little clear pipe, trying to struggle conscientiously with the Irish patois and brogue, and his perfect and earnest seriousness, had the most curious effect:

"Dere was feastin' and fightin',
De neighbours delightin',
And singin' and pratin',
And lots of the batin'
At Mulligan's weddin'.
Whack foldi dididdle follero !
Whack fol di di do !"

They were delighted with this little performance. The doctor enjoyed it. "A capital song, sir, and well sung. Thank you, sir."

The little man replied, with a bow, "I am so glad you liked it."

"I dare say, sir, you have plenty more on your list," said the doctor, "and would favour us."

"No, no," Howard interposed; "that will do very well. In fact, it is time to be thinking of bed. What do you say, little man?"

"Whatever you please, papa." Then to Lucy: "Did you like 'Mulligan's Weddin'?" Then he began to laugh with a hearty child's laugh. "So funny, you know—a wedding *here*; and then, Mulligan's. Ha! ha! Isn't it now?"

"Getting late," said the doctor. "I must go and look after my stars. This will be a great night for observations. I shall search and search until I read something good there for Miss Lucy."

"And do you really do all this?" said the captain.

"I have a regular observatory, a fine glass, a meridian no less, and go regularly to work. Do you ever see the Southern Counties' Times? No, I should say not," added the doctor, laughing; "the circulation is limited, and the matter very local. Well, there is an astronomical letter there every week from the present speaker."

"I should like to see it very much," said the captain; "I once had a little taste that way myself."

"Put on something warm and come," said the doctor. "It's only across the lake, and my boatman is waiting."

The little man had been listening with distended eyes. He put up his mouth to Lucy: "Whisper," he said; "make them take *me*. Oh, do!"

The doctor heard him. "And why not?" he said. "We would not keep him long, and Captain Hallam could bring him back, though it is rather late."

The little man crowded with delight, and clapped his hands. "Let us go at once! Come!" And he began to pull at the doctor's arm.

The father, who was at the other end of the room, heard something of this, and came over. "At this hour? Not to be thought of, my dear child! Folly! I can't allow it. Go to bed."

Utter blankness and misery came into the boy's face, and he hung down his head.

"My dear child," said his father, lifting him

till the child's face was on a level with his own, "why, you would catch cold in your chest, and take ill, and die; and then what would become of poor papa? To-morrow we will drive over to this gentleman's."

The boy gave a deep sigh of disappointment, but of resignation. He looked back wistfully towards the doctor, who embodied such exquisite and ravishing charms—instruments that turned, and screwed, and went up and down; an inexhaustible source of entertainment. But he turned to his father.

"Papa, I should not like to take cold, and die, and leave you. So please to ring for Andy to come and take me to bed."

At that moment the door opened, and a short figure of a man, with a curious quaint head, stood looking in. He peered round, and then, without the least concern or consciousness of any one's presence, called out, with a nod,

"Masther Fred, it's time now."

"Go," said his father. "There's Andy come for you. Wish all these ladies and gentlemen good night."

This ceremony the little man achieved with courtly form, going round and putting out his hand, and, in the ladies' instance, putting up his cheek for the kiss which he seemed to know would be inevitable. The father's turn came last, and he lifted him up to give him a warm embrace, and looked after him with rapt fondness. Taking Andy's hand, the little man walked away.

Then the clergyman and his wife and the rest took their leave for the night. The captain and the doctor came into the hall muffled in great-coats. It was a fine clear night, and they could see the stars without the aid of the doctor's telescopes. The lake was at the back of the house, and the doctor's own boat was waiting—"My cab," he always called it.

But Colonel Howard and Mrs. Winter sat long in the drawing-room after all the rest had gone, talking, we may suppose, over some passages in life, long gone by. The French clock on the chimney-piece struck twelve, and half-past twelve, and one. Lucy had not yet gone to her bedroom, but fluttered nervously about the hall and passages and the now ghostly dining-room. For she knew very well what troubled pictures were raised in the drawing-room. Suddenly the door opened, and he came out with a candle; as he saw her, he suddenly started back, but recovered in a moment.

"Oh!" he said, "how strange, how wonderfully strange! For the moment I thought—no matter now—you ought to be asleep, my dear child."

"I was waiting, dear Cousin Howard, to say good-night to you."

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